DECEMBER 1953

COMMENTARY

How We Live Now in America — GRANVILLE HICKS

The New Germany and Her Remaining Jews — HAL LEHRMAN

The Issue Between Judaism and Christianity — JACOB TAUBES

Our Changing Ideals, as Seen on TV — NORMAN PODHORETZ

The Crisis Behind Russia's Slowdown — RICHARD LOWENTHAL

Dictators, Democracy, & Latin American Jewry — BENNO WEISER

The Illusions of the Intelligentsia — ROBERT E. FITCH

A Family Man—A Story — DAN JACOBSON

Mourning My Grandmother—A Poem — HOWARD O. SACKLER

From the American Scene
A Pulpit in the South — HARRY L. GOLDEN

Cedars of Lebanon
Three Talmudic Tales — RALPH GORDON

On the Horizon
Lord Jowitt and the Case of Alger Hiss — JAMES GROSSMAN

The Study of Man
More Insanity Than a Century Ago? — NATHAN GLAZER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

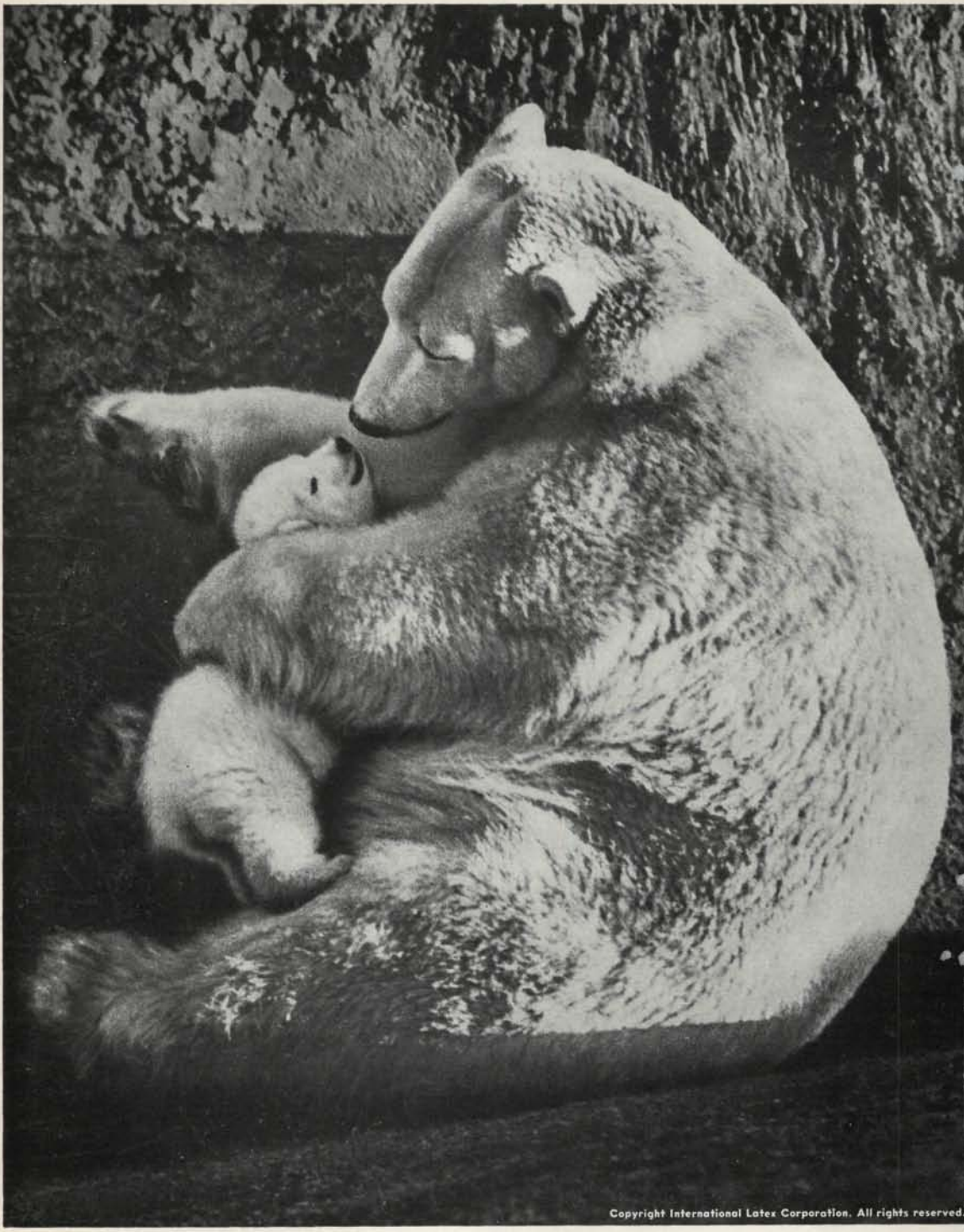
Solomon F. Bloom — Martin Greenberg — Henry L. Roberts

S. D. Goitein — Nathan Glick — Daniel J. Boorstin

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

50c



Keep your baby "Socially Acceptable" in Playtex® baby pants!

TRADE MARK

MORE MOTHERS BUY PLAYTEX THAN ANY OTHER BRAND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, *the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture.*

The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY'S *contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. Its sponsorship of* COMMENTARY *is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.*

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

JACOB BLAUSTEIN, *President*

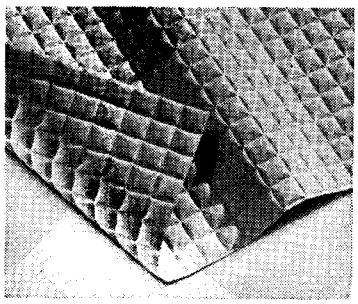
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They're best when baby's an infant... best when baby's "in training"!

Why? Because Softex Baby Pants are waterproofed without rubber

Yes, they're best for an infant... because Softex can't overheat, chafe or stick to baby. They help prevent diaper rash and urine scald. And Softex Pants are best for a "Trainee", too. They're scientifically designed to give the toddler extra freedom to climb, creep and walk. They're easy to slip up and down, when a child is being toilet trained! Softex won't crack, peel or stiffen. All sizes. Baby colors and white. Silk Softex Pants, $1. Quilted Rubber Pad; bassinette to crib sizes, 79¢ to $3.75.

Prices slightly higher on the West Coast



Kleinert's *Softex Baby Pants*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

DECEMBER 1953 VOLUME 16, NUMBER 6

How We Live Now in America	*Granville Hicks*	505
The New Germany and Her Remaining Jews	*Hal Lehrman*	513
The Issue Between Judaism and Christianity	*Jacob Taubes*	525
Our Changing Ideals, as Seen on TV	*Norman Podhoretz*	534
The Crisis Behind Russia's Slowdown	*Richard Lowenthal*	541
Dictators, Democracy, and Latin American Jewry	*Benno Weiser*	553
The Illusions of the Intelligentsia	*Robert E. Fitch*	562
A Family Man *A Story*	*Dan Jacobson*	568
From the American Scene		
A Pulpit in the South	*Harry L. Golden*	574
Cedars of Lebanon		
Three Talmudic Tales	*Ralph Gordon*	580
On the Horizon		
Lord Jowitt and the Case of Alger Hiss	*James Grossman*	582
The Study of Man		
More Insanity Than a Century Ago?	*Nathan Glazer*	587
Mourning My Grandmother *A Poem*	*Howard O. Sackler*	590
Letters from Readers		591
Books in Review		
Level Sunlight, by Maurice Samuel	*Solomon F. Bloom*	594
A Handful of Blackberries, by Ignazio Silone	*Martin Greenberg*	596
The Jews in the Soviet Satellites, by Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky, Nicolas Sylvain	*Henry L. Roberts*	600
Politics and the Constitution in the History of the United States, by William Winslow Crosskey	*Daniel J. Boorstin*	602
Falasha Anthology, by Wolf Leslau	*S. D. Goitein*	606
7½ Cents, by Richard Bissell	*Nathan Glick*	608

Associate Editors
NATHAN GLAZER
CLEMENT GREENBERG
MARTIN GREENBERG
ROBERT WARSHOW

Editor
ELLIOT E. COHEN

Assistant Editor
SHERRY ABEL

Business Manager
FRANCES GREEN

Advertising
DOROTHY PUTNEY

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
ALAN M. STROOCK, *Chairman*
CHARLES D. BREITEL, ALBERT FURTH, MAURICE GLINERT, RALPH K. GUINZBURG,
SYDNEY M. KAYE, ANNE W. LANGMAN, LOUIS M. RABINOWITZ,
MARIE L. ROTHSCHILD, RALPH E. SAMUEL, DAVID SHER,
JACK D. TARCHER, BEN TOUSTER, MILTON WEILL, HILDA D. WEISL

COMMENTARY, incorporating *Contemporary Jewish Record:* Published monthly by the American Jewish Committee. 50c a copy; $5.00 a year; 2 years $8.00; 3 years, $10.00. Canadian and Foreign $1.00 a year additional. Offices, 34 West 33rd Street, New York 1. Re-entered as second class matter October 30, 1945 at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1953 by the American Jewish Committee. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved by the publisher in the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, and all countries participating in the International Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Magazine Subject Index, and Public Affairs Information Service.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

Israel, the Arab Countries, and the UN *Hal Lehrman*

Hal Lehrman sends an on-the-spot report from Israel, examining the roots of the present border conflicts which set off the Kibya incident and its international repercussions.

The Return to Wishful Thinking *G. F. Hudson*

Following the death of Stalin, and some easing of Soviet pressures, a strong tide of opinion has arisen both in England and in this country which, in the name of "realism," calls for a "live-and-let-live" policy. Some argue that Soviet totalitarianism is really a heretical religion and must be met by tolerant understanding, not force; some assert that conscience is irrelevant to international politics (at least regarding Russia). G. F. Hudson contributes a penetrating study on the touchiest of topics.

The Youth of Abraham Cahan *William and Sarah Schack*

Cahan's splendid autobiography provides material for a study of the forces that shaped one of the great figures in American Jewish history, and affords us an opportunity to understand the East European background which produced so many of the extraordinary secular Jewish intellectuals of our time.

Toward Sound Security Programs *Dillard Stokes*

At a vast expenditure of time and money the government has instituted massive security programs which, after the dust and din of investigation died down, were seen to have banished only a handful of security risks from government employment. A Washington correspondent argues, from the viewpoint of one who believes that we have had, and still have, a serious security problem in Washington, that programs to date have failed so lamentably because they were more concerned with the question of beliefs than with actual security.

Medieval Christianity and the Jews *Leon Poliakov*

The prevailing impression is that the Middle Ages was a period of unmitigated darkness for Jews. A historian looks at the record, and finds documentation for a somewhat different picture.

The Isolation of Yiddish Literature *Judd L. Teller*

How has it come about that Yiddish cultural creativity, which reached a high level of achievement in the United States, has separated itself from the interests and concerns of the Yiddish-speaking American Jews who make up its audience?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

HOW WE LIVE NOW IN AMERICA

Some Unprophesied Fruits of the Machine Age

GRANVILLE HICKS

AROUND our house in upstate New York are lawn and flower gardens and a kitchen garden, but beyond this small area of cultivation the forest has taken over. Yet this was a farm for more than a hundred years, supporting four generations, and when Roxborough's population was at its peak, in the middle of the 19th century, it was one of hundreds of farms in the town. Today there aren't half a dozen men in the whole of Roxborough who get the major part of their livelihood from farming. We have our kitchen gardens, and some of us have hens, and here and there a family keeps a cow, but most of what we eat comes from the counters and shelves of supermarkets. Our clothing is selected from mail order catalogues or bought in city stores, and the spinning wheels and looms and hatchels of our ancestors are bait for antique dealers. The fuel we burn is delivered in trucks and wood for the fireplace is hard to come by and almost as dear as in the cities.

These are signs of a two-way revolution. The farming is now done elsewhere, and done with fewer and fewer men and more and more machines, under conditions that often approximate the conditions of the mass production industries. We live in the country, but we live on the produce of California and Texas and Florida and New Jersey, just as we would if we lived in Troy or Albany or New York City. And by and large we make our living out of industry, most of us directly, by working in the factories of the Capital District, most of the others indirectly, by catering to the summer people or serving the needs of the commuters. The small town has been absorbed by the great society.

THE kind of life we lead is made possible by a series of machines, just as it would be if we lived in a city, the only difference being that most of the machines are owned by us individually instead of being parts of a gigantic impersonal apparatus. The apartment dweller takes for granted water and

---

LAST MONTH William Petersen marshaled in our pages the statistical evidence of the prosperity and "openness" of American society ("Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?"); GRANVILLE HICKS here approaches the same subject from a more concrete standpoint: the life of the town of "Roxborough" in upstate New York; critics of modern industrial societies may find of particular interest his discussion of the effects of machines on the freedom and individuality of our citizenry. Mr. Hicks is the author of numerous books, including *The Great Tradition* (1933), *Small Town* (1946), and, most recently, *There Was a Man in Our Town* (1952). An earlier report on postwar "Roxborough" by Mr. Hicks appeared in our issue of March of this year.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sanitation and light and heat and transportation, whereas these are matters that we have to take care of ourselves. Even at that, however, we are in much the same situation as millions of people who live in the housing developments that have multiplied on the fringes of the cities, and we are closer to the apartment dwellers than we are to the people who lived on these acres twenty-five years ago.

Counting cars, pumps, lawn mower, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, and so forth, our family has at its disposal at least a dozen motors, and our neighbors have as many or more. For most people in the town the automobile is the indispensable machine, for it is what makes it possible for them not to have to choose between working in the city and living in the country. But a car is not merely a key to a job; for us in Roxborough, as for millions of Americans, it is the foundation of our social life, and we drive in it both for recreation and to get to the places where recreation, of the kind we happen to be seeking, can be found. For us, as for millions, it has altered the mores of courtship and sex, and it is with respect to the use of the car or the cars that a major part of family life has to be planned. Moreover, for those who know something about machinery, and they are numerous in Roxborough, it is a focus of intellectual interest and one of the livelier topics of conversation.

Next to the automobile, it is electricity that has revolutionized Roxborough. The first power lines were run into the town barely twenty-five years ago, against fanatical opposition. We ourselves, because we were a long way from the main line, spent several summers and two winters here without electricity. Kerosene lamps were no novelty to my wife and me, for we had grown up with them, and we remembered the excitement of getting electric lights. That was what electricity meant at the time of the First World War—safer, more adequate, more convenient lighting. But by 1937, when electricity was coaxed by subsidies up our road, it brought release from a dozen kinds of drudgery by way of the automatic water pump, the refrigerator, the washing machine, the electric flatiron, and, eventually, the electric range and the automatic oil burner. As the power lines have pushed farther and farther back into the hills since World War II, they have carried all these conveniences and new means of entertainment as well. When power fails, it is, many people say, the television that they miss most. If we are happy enough without TV, we do miss the record player and the FM radio.

As anybody can see, rural life more and more closely resembles urban life, and this is true not only for small towns like ours, which has become a semi-suburb, but also for the areas that raise the nation's food. In the dairy country of western New York, in the Corn Belt, in the Wheat Belt, in the fruit-raising sections of California and Florida, farmers not only have thousands of dollars worth of labor-saving machinery in their fields and barns; they have the conveniences and luxuries in their homes. Even in the poorer farm country the automobile and electricity are remaking the pattern of rural life.

NATURALLY the conveniences and luxuries have to be paid for, and they wouldn't be available if people couldn't buy them. The revolution, in other words, is economic as well as technological. During the worst years of the depression we were spending summers in Roxborough and winters in the city, and we could see that the victims of the depression fared better in Roxborough. The city jobless had nothing, but in Roxborough a man without a job could raise some food, cut some wood, do a little tinkering here and there. He was better off not only because he and his family ate more adequately but also because he had something to do. If a depression should come along now, we in Roxborough would still be better fixed than city people, but we should have more to lose than did the people who were living here in 1930. That is part of the price we pay for being absorbed by the great society.

What, on the other hand, we have gained

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will not be underestimated by someone who has been looking at the town for twenty years. The effect of prosperity is to be measured not merely in terms of motors and gadgets but also and especially in terms of human satisfactions. Men, well paid, able to live comfortably, have more self-respect. Women, released from part of their drudgery, with a little leisure and money enough to enjoy it, seem younger and prettier. Men, women, and children look better and obviously feel better, for they eat more nourishing food and can afford to go to doctors and dentists. If a TV set or a new car seems more important to a lot of people than dental repairs or a coat of paint on the house, most of them get around to the dentistry and the paint sooner or later.

As the town has become a semi-suburb, it has acquired a more varied population. Most of the newcomers are factory workers, just as most of the natives are, but we have acquired some white-collar workers and professionals. Yet class stratification hasn't taken place. Like any other town, Roxborough is full of cliques, but their composition is constantly shifting, and they seldom seem to be determined by the jobs or the incomes or the education of their members. And if you look at the cars parked outside the town hall when some community function is going on, all you can tell about the people inside is that most of them seem to be pretty prosperous.

The blurring of class lines is not peculiar to Roxborough; it is happening all over America. The breaking down of class distinctions, as has often been said, is most evident in the matter of clothes. In the autumn of 1952 I attended a Stevenson rally in Troy, and from the applause I gathered that a large part of the audience was made up of union members, but it was impossible to tell from the way people were dressed who was the factory worker and who belonged to the middle class. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that workers currently have money to spend on clothes, but that isn't the whole story. By and large it is considered improper in our society today to use clothes as a sign of social status or even, in the daily routine, of wealth. Clothes that served a symbolic purpose—the top hat, the frock coat, the starched shirt—have almost completely disappeared, and formal dress has become less common and less formal. Not only do Americans of all classes look much the same when they dress up; they are indistinguishable when they are not dressed up, and that is a larger and larger part of the time. If it takes a sharp eye to tell an original evening gown from an expensive imitation and the expensive imitation from a model that can be purchased by any shop girl, it is quite impossible to tell the rich girl from the poor one when both are wearing blue jeans.

A few conventions do persist. White-collar workers usually wear collars and ties, though not always jackets, and there are restaurants that won't serve a man who isn't wearing a coat and tie or a woman in slacks. But these conventions are vestigial. More and more people can dress as they please, and differences grow out of individual tastes rather than social distinctions. Even expensive clothes, though their expensiveness may be obvious to those in the know, do not say to economic inferiors, as clothes used to do, "I am different from and better than you."

In the more stable societies of the past, when class differences were generally accepted, there were recognized ways in which they were symbolized. We Americans have never been wholly at ease with such symbols, and probably that is why at certain periods so much emphasis has been laid upon them. After the Civil War, when great fortunes were being made, the newly rich found it imperative to display their wealth, and we entered upon a period of what Thorstein Veblen called conspicuous consumption. When a man made a million, he built an ostentatious house that was too large for his family and staffed it with more servants than he needed. As his wealth grew, his carriages, his private car, his yacht, his clothes, his wife's clothes, his art collection, his philanthropies, everything about his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life proclaimed the fact that he had money.

Today the conspicuous consumers are not the industrialists and financiers but the stars of movies and radio and the members of the expense-account aristocracy. And though many people envy these publicized figures their swimming pools and their night club glamor and extravagance, almost everyone is aware that their wealth doesn't mean much, that it is almost as accidental as the prosperity of the winner of the Irish Sweepstakes or the sobbing beneficiary of "Strike It Rich" or some other giveaway program. These are not our masters; they are, on the contrary, our pets, whom we have chosen to pamper.

Although there are fewer very poor and, relatively speaking, fewer very rich than there were twenty-five or fifty years ago, there are still grievous economic inequalities in this country, but they don't seem so important as they once did. This is partly because almost all of us are better off than we were, and therefore aren't so bitter against those who are still better off. It is partly because we know that the rich are heavily taxed and that their powers are curbed in many ways. And it is partly because the rich, instead of flaunting their economic superiority, seem a little embarrassed about it and try to assure us that they aren't any different from us. So we go about our various businesses with no feeling of inferiority and little resentment.

Most of the able-bodied men in Roxborough, as I have said, work in factories. They work forty or forty-four hours a week instead of the fifty-four or sixty or seventy-two hours that were common in the 19th century and persisted into the 20th. Many of them are engaged in work that taxes body and mind, but in this time of full employment a man's nose can't be kept to the grindstone all through the working day. Likely enough he gets a break for coffee, and if he goes to the toilet and sneaks a cigarette, he isn't going to be fired. When our Roxborough people come home they aren't exhausted, but are ready to work around the house—and practically every man in town has a dozen home repair jobs that his conscience and his wife are nagging him to finish—or go to a party or a square dance, or settle in for an evening with TV. Almost everybody is in debt, for no one makes enough to pay for all the things he and his wife and children want, but it is comparatively seldom that a car or a television set is repossessed. These people are getting a share of the good things of life, and they know it.

To the responsibilities and obligations of the great society most of them give little thought. They pay their union dues as automatically and, when they think about it, as resentfully as they pay their income taxes. For the most part they regard both government and unions as necessary evils, and they are more conscious of both than they are of the higher levels of management and ownership. They feel no animosity towards the remote big shots, for they are scarcely aware of their existence. Their gripes are over little things—the unreasonableness of a foreman, the stupidity of a fellow worker, the cost and quality of food in the cafeteria. Few of them, so far as I can tell, find acute satisfaction in their work, and yet no one feels that his job is meaningless drudgery. (When a man feels that way today, he goes and gets another job.) Any job that I hear talk about calls for the exercise of some skill that entitles a man to the respect of his companions and to self-respect. And even when the day's work is pretty tedious, a time comes when a man can go home to race motorcycles or paint the house or make love to his wife.

For the women of Roxborough the revolution has been even more of a success. To begin with, if they need or want to work, there are jobs for them and a great variety of jobs. Most women under fifty have held jobs at one time or another, and a considerable proportion are holding jobs now. A girl expects to work before she is married and perhaps for a year or two afterwards, but she rarely thinks of herself as having a ca-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reer, and she has no regrets about quitting work when she starts to have a family. If she goes back to work when her children are old enough to do without her, it is more often because she is bored than because her earnings are indispensable.

What makes the big difference for most Roxborough women is the revolution that has taken place in their homes through the acquisition of labor-saving machinery. It has been a rapid revolution everywhere, and in Roxborough it has largely come about in ten or a dozen years. We have leapt almost in a single bound from an era in which a woman had to carry water, sweep and beat her rugs, scrub the family washing, and keep food in the spring house, into an era of multiple mechanical servants. Unless she has young children, a Roxborough woman enjoys hours of daily leisure, hours in which, of course, she may be very busy, but not under the old compulsions.

Here again it is true not only that the conditions of rural life approach those of urban life but also that the differences between classes are diminishing. When I was a boy, a woman didn't consider herself really well off unless her husband could afford to hire at least one domestic servant. Working-class families, needless to say, didn't have servants, nor the lower ranks of the middle class, but in business and the professions a man hadn't arrived if his wife had to do all her own housework. Today, with so many better paid and otherwise more attractive jobs open to women, domestic labor has become a major luxury. Higher and higher in the social and financial scale we find that women are relying on machines, just as the Roxborough women do, to lighten their burdens and give them leisure.

IF WE try to add it all up, we can only conclude that this is a prosperous society, with a larger and larger proportion of the people sharing in the prosperity. Distinctions diminish between country and city, between rich and poor, between men and women, between old families and the children of immigrants, even—though so much more is to be desired—between black and white.

In *Democracy in America* Alexis de Tocqueville wrote:

> The good things and the evils of life are more equally distributed in the world: great wealth tends to disappear, the number of small fortunes to increase; desires and gratifications are multiplied, but extraordinary prosperity and irremediable penury are alike unknown. The sentiment of ambition is universal, but the scope of ambition is seldom vast. . . . Human existence becomes longer, and property more secure; life is not adorned with brilliant trophies, but it is extremely easy and tranquil. Few pleasures are either very refined or very coarse; and highly polished manners are as uncommon as great brutality of taste. . . . Almost all extremes are softened or blunted: all that was most prominent is superseded by some mean term, at once less lofty and less low, less brilliant and less obscure, than what before existed in the world.

It was in 1831 that de Tocqueville visited the United States, but much of what he wrote fits our revolution. In the second half of the 19th century, with the expansion of industry, it appeared that he had been a poor prophet, for the differences between rich and poor were constantly becoming greater, and equality of opportunity seemed to be a myth. That was the theme of much of the agitation of the period: the promise of American life had been betrayed. But now, with the industrial revolution in a later phase, de Tocqueville's predictions seem to be coming true. If in our day we tend to overstate the degree of equality, as certainly he did in his, the contrast between what we have and what the world has generally known can scarcely be exaggerated.

Although he believed that the worldwide triumph of democracy was inevitable and was on the whole a good thing, de Tocqueville, it will be recalled, was not unqualifiedly enthusiastic about the new order. Immediately after the passage I have quoted he wrote, "When I survey this countless multitude of beings, shaped in each other's likeness, amid whom nothing rises and nothing falls, the sight of such universal uniformity saddens and chills me, and I am

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tempted to regret that state of society which has ceased to be." The nightmare of "universal uniformity" has haunted critics of democracy ever since, and we still hear voices, some American, some European, complaining of the standardization of life in the United States.

American democracy is open to many criticisms, including many of those expressed by de Tocqueville more than a hundred years ago, but the charge of standardization will not hold water. As the experience of totalitarian countries ought to teach us, it takes a lot of doing to standardize human beings even in a slave state, and in a free state it is impossible. The individual may be standardized in a stable, stratified society, but in a social order that is constantly changing he cannot be. You cannot make people alike by giving them more and more opportunities to be different.

A QUARTER of a century ago, as mass production got under way, the assembly lines devised by efficiency engineers threatened what seemed to be an intolerable standardization of labor. Man was treated as a machine, not as a human being. But it soon became clear that it was more economical, as well as more humane, to treat machines as machines and men as men. Purely mechanical labor can always be done more cheaply by machines, freeing human beings for the more varied and more creative tasks that the machines cannot perform. Furthermore, through their unions and their individual acts of self-assertion, human beings find ways of resisting the tyranny and monotony of the assembly line. And so long as he has leisure, no man is likely to become a robot; even the man who performs one simple function all through the working day turns into a Jack-of-all-trades when he gets home.

The standardization of the product is the basis of modern industry, and sometimes the effects are good and sometimes they are bad, but even when they are bad, a cure for the evil is likely to appear. If the baking industry succeeds in foisting upon the nation a uniformly tasteless loaf of bread, smaller bakers emerge to furnish better bread for those who are willing to pay for it, and more and more housewives spend some of their leisure in doing their own baking. One supermarket is much like another, but any supermarket has a variety of goods on its shelves that would dumbfound the corner grocer of a generation ago. And the magazines that are sold in the supermarkets indicate that the diet of the average American is more and more varied, experimental, cosmopolitan. Sometimes, indeed, it appears that we are on the way to becoming a nation of gourmets.

What is true of food is true of most of the other products of modern industry. The housing shortage that resulted from the depression and the war has led in these times of rising costs to the mass production of houses, usually badly built, ugly, and all pretty much alike. Even at their worst, however, such houses are preferable to the old-fashioned tenements of the factory towns, and there is no doubt that mass production could do much better than it is doing now. Furthermore, the growth of Roxborough is proof that a lot of people don't want to live in housing projects and, thanks to the automobile, don't have to.

It is in mass entertainment that many critics have found the greatest threat of standardization—movies, radio, TV. Unquestionably these media have introduced an element of uniformity in American life: they give us our heroes, our catch phrases, our jokes; they influence our tastes and values. Possibly this degree of uniformity, holding together a widely dispersed people, is not a bad thing, even though it is accomplished on a low cultural level. But in any case what the critics forget is that these media increasingly cater to a diversity of tastes and that through such by-products as the long-playing record they have enriched the lives of those who happen not to want what the millions want.

The way we Americans spend our leisure time is the best proof that standardization is a myth. The critic will point out that hobbies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are themselves constantly being standardized, and that is true: as soon as people are interested in model railroads or sports cars or "hi-fi" sets or whatever it may be, societies grow up to organize these hobbies and businesses to exploit them. But that does not do away with the fact of diversity. How do you suppose the people of Roxborough are entertaining themselves this weekend? They are not all watching TV, though probably more are doing that than any other one thing; they are not all out riding in their automobiles, though that, too, is one of the more popular forms of diversion; they are gardening, bird-watching, listening to symphonies, tinkering with machinery, horseback-riding, playing cards, dancing, even reading books. You cannot see them without knowing that these are people who have multitudinous choices and are happy in that fact.

PERHAPS it is a law of industrial development that machines first enslave men and then liberate them. What we are seeing in the United States is an indication, if not proof, that at the higher technological levels industrialism can provide the abundance that once seemed a utopian pipe dream, and that on this abundance can be built a civilization in which opportunity is almost universal and special privilege at a minimum. Our revolution, like all revolutions, has entailed great suffering and brought many evils, but at least we see the possibility that the good can outweigh the bad.

Certainly few of my Roxborough neighbors seem dissatisfied with their lot. They know, to be sure, that they're not living in paradise: they and their families suffer from disease and accidents; husbands and wives sometimes get along badly, and children are often a problem; no day is without its worries and irritations. But this is the kind of society they want to live in—one in which jobs are plentiful and pay is good and there are lots of things you can buy with your money. Their outlook on life may be materialistic, as some Europeans charge, but they are easier-going about money than most Europeans of any nation or class. They enjoy being generous and unsuspicious in money matters, and there are few of them who would cheat you unless they thought you were getting ready to cheat them. It would be reckless to say that all spend their money wisely, but most of them get what is for them their money's worth.

Whatever their personal problems, there are only two social problems that concern them, but these concern them constantly and deeply: the possibility of depression and the possibility of war. Either, they fully realize, can destroy most of what they value in life. Depression is something most of those over twenty-five know something about at first-hand, for deprivation and fear in the early 30's left their mark even on the very young. As for war, it was only eight years ago that atom bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and I believe there are few of my neighbors who do not give daily thought to the chance of their falling on New York or Washington or Schenectady.

ALL America, of course, is in the same boat: either depression or war would be the end of the particular chapter we as a people are now writing. Since we have no assurance that we can avoid a depression, and are even more dubious about preventing war, we can only regard our experiment thus far as tentative. But it is not any the less significant because it may be interrupted—or, for that matter, finished for good and all.

Even if we leave depression and war out of account, we know that we pay a price for what we have, but most of my neighbors would say it is not too high a price. The price is to be defined chiefly in terms of the stresses and strains that are incident to the functioning of the great society. These stresses and strains are most palpable when you have to travel from Astor Place, say, to 125th Street on New York City's Lexington Avenue subway at five-thirty in an August heat wave, or when, in a November ice storm, you drive from a factory in the southeast section of Detroit to a housing project on the northwest boundary. Who can reckon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the price in irritation and frustration, to say nothing of the threat to life and limb, that is paid by each one of millions of commuters in an age in which home is here and work is there? How many traumas, to say nothing of the accidents that get into the papers, are sustained in taking city and suburban families for a Sunday at the beach or in the country? It is no wonder that a fairly large number of people crack up. But fortunately the human species is tough, and, as most of my neighbors would say, we can take it.

The great society is necessarily a highly organized society, and organization is painful even when it is efficient and doubly so when it isn't. The "hurry up and wait" of the war is constantly reflected in civilian life. The instrument of organization is bureaucracy, and the *sine qua non* of bureaucracy is red tape. One of my neighbors, who has driven his own express truck for more than thirty years, comments bitterly on the state regulations, ever more numerous and more complicated, that apply to his business. He by no means believes that all these regulations are unnecessary, but necessary or not they are annoying. The blunders of bureaucracy, whether the United States government's or Montgomery Ward's, are one of the favorite topics of conversation in Roxborough.

Our version of the great society operates partly through legal compulsions, partly through economic inducements, and partly through persuasion. Persuasion most commonly takes the form of advertising, and the advertising man is one of the distinctive products of our culture. Since mass production is possible only if a lot of people can be counted on to want the same thing at the same time, some form of advertising is indispensable, but the constant assault to which our sensibilities are subjected seems excessive. Fortunately most people develop an immunity to pressure and a skepticism regarding claims, but the atmosphere is polluted just the same.

The blatant voice of the advertising man reminds us that this is still, in some degree, a business civilization, and it is precisely the question of the degree that is important. Not only has the power of business been cut down since the 20's; the prestige of business has declined. For one thing, the expansion of government has created new careers outside of business, and many young people have found government service more attractive. As both government and organized labor have grown stronger, business has come to seem less important to the average citizen. The profit motive is still a vital force, but to many people "security" is a more potent word than "profit." Moreover, as prosperity becomes widespread, there seems to be less general acceptance of pecuniary standards. There are a few sharp dealers among my neighbors, and their capacity for making a fast buck is almost always spoken of with a kind of grudging admiration, but most people see no reason for trying to emulate them. They feel that if these local entrepreneurs want money as badly as all that, it's O.K., but they're not going to be bothered so long as they can get by. And they feel the same, so far as I can tell, about the big shots of business when they read about them in the papers.

No one is foolish enough to think that the state of affairs that exists in the United States is perfect. It is enough if we have here some indication that the industrial revolution is at long last being made to serve the interests of all or almost all of the people. We are approximating a way of life that has been the goal of human struggle for a long time. In this period of American hegemony in the West our friends may very well wonder whether we are wise enough to make good use of our power, but our follies ought not to blind them—or us—to the real significance of what has been happening in the United States. It is here, not in Russia, that the great revolution of our time is most advanced. Even if disaster overtakes our experiment tomorrow, the degree of success we have achieved ought to offer hope to mankind so long as mankind survives.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW GERMANY AND HER REMAINING JEWS

A Reporter's Notebook

HAL LEHRMAN

DÜSSELDORF (late August): Fists still swing freely in Germany. My first election rally of the current campaign, in a suburb. The speaker was former Panzer General Hasso von Manteufel, for the FDP, one of the three parties in Chancellor Adenauer's coalition. His appeal is nationalist, addressed to "my old battle comrades." A few years back, when Manteufel was last billed here, the young Communist Blueshirts howled him down and invaded the platform. This time everybody expected trouble again. You could pick the Communists out. They came in groups of two and three, in caps and leather jackets, and sat down all over the hall.

The meeting started with a half-hour film on the East Berlin uprising: workers stamping on the Red Flag, firing bad eggs at Soviet tanks, and doing the other brave things that thrilled the free world. The mood was just right when the FDP district leader stood up to introduce the General and began denouncing all Reds everywhere. The Communists in the house should have stayed quiet until they could let loose at Manteufel, or else they should have performed by cue and heckled in unison. Instead, they emitted individual, disorganized shouts at the local speaker. The FDP counter-offensive clicked beautifully. At the first disturbance a squad, five men strong, would proceed down an aisle in the direction of the noise. The second roar enabled them to spot and pinpoint their man. At the third outbreak, two of them would squeeze through in the row behind, grab the man under each arm, and haul him into the clear. There, two more would grab hold of him, and then the four would drag him out of the theater, a fifth "usher" running alongside and methodically punching him in the face. This happened half a dozen times. After that, quiet, except for the sporadic but voluntary departure of more Communists. *"Das ist ein Neger-Mord,"* muttered a leather-jacket in front of me as he got up to go. Manteufel made an oration interrupted only by applause.

I left before he finished. The lobby was packed with police, who had watched without interfering. Outside, a few Communists, identifiable by bloodied noses and cut lips, lingered across the street. The Düsseldorf police chief, wearing civilian clothes, sat in his sleek Mercedes a block away, his deputy chief at the wheel. A German reporter introduced me. Just for the needle, I asked him about freedom of speech. He looked out at me archly and shrugged: "The General also has a right to speak, *nein*?"

DRIVING down for a one-day visit in Cologne, I made first contact with two of the Jewish "problems" in postwar Germany. The other passenger in the Israel Purchasing Mission's car was an engineer—a technical expert selecting goods earmarked for Israel under Bonn's reparations treaty. German-born, he had left in 1932, returned five months ago.

How does it feel to be back as an Israeli official? "Comfortable enough, if you like living in a golden ghetto. We've built it. The Germans are polite, even friendly. But we keep away, except for official business. It's an

---

HAL LEHRMAN first began to write for this magazine in 1946, while he was traveling through the satellite countries of Eastern Europe—in those days still accessible to an inquiring reporter. Since then he has written for us on Israel, on the Middle East, and on the fund-raising problems of American Jewry; he has published two books (*Russia's Europe* and *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow*); he has held a Guggenheim Fellowship; and he has achieved a reputation as one of the most perceptive and authoritative reporters in the country on the areas of his special competence —Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Israel. Mr. Lehrman is now in Israel, after having traveled through Germany and Austria. In this first installment of a series of reports we will publish from him, Mr. Lehrman deals with Germany just before and after the recent elections, focusing on the relations between the German authorities and the remaining Jews in Germany.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unwritten law we've made for ourselves, without discussion. Makes life a bit meager, but you wouldn't play pinochle with someone whose cousin may have put your cousin in a stove." Israeli nationality, he thinks, does get him special preferences. On three entries and exits, customs officers passed him through even ahead of Americans and British, with kowtows and not a suitcase opened. (They did the same for me—but perhaps he's right: I carried in full view my little blue and white overnight bag marked EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES, in Hebrew letters.) Toward Germans in the mass, he feels contempt. "They've decided Hitler was right about the Jews' international influence. That's what destroyed him, they say. And they respect us as 'conquerors.' The blame is put on Hitler, for committing the stupidity of provoking us. And this is about all they blame him for."

The fifty-five-member Mission staff has its offices in a couple of one-story buildings in a compound on Ottostrasse belonging to Cologne's Jewish Community, the *Kultusgemeinde*. Across the lawn is the handsomely rebuilt Jewish Hospital, too big now for the community's 800 survivors. They rent it as a military hospital to the Belgians, who patrol a piece of this British Zone.

"Locating ourselves in Cologne has one advantage," said I. Z. as he showed me around the cramped quarters of the Mission. "It's the big city that is closest to Bonn, where the government is. This allows easy communication without making it seem that we have diplomatic relations. But Cologne was badly hit by bombs. Housing has been very difficult. . . . Though we opened shop in May, we spent over a month just in arranging procedures with the Germans. Actually, we've only ordered 40 million marks' worth of the 240 millions due us up to next April. Mostly it's been just raw and semi-processed materials like iron, steel, rayon, caustic soda. Checking on heavy capital goods is a slow process, but once cleared there will be real big orders."

Z. smiled when I told him about the engineer's "golden ghetto." He wouldn't swear that bachelors in the Mission at all times resisted "fraternization." Still, the part about social distance on the official level is true. "Until now it's been all business, and very correct behavior on our side. The Germans are more than cooperative; they've made concessions they might have withheld if they wanted to stick to the contract. We go to lunch occasionally, or meet them in cafés, but only officially. No cocktail parties, and certainly no invitations to each other's homes. On their side, the hesitation is based on tact, and fear that we would rebuff them. But this won't go on forever. The ice is bound to melt. It's already begun melting in Israel. The first two German ships with reparations goods made port there this month. We were so afraid of demonstrations that the ships were rerouted from Haifa to Jaffa, where they might slip in with less notice. Word got around, of course—the police were on alert—but nothing happened, absolutely nothing."

The engineer was right about German awe of Jewish strength. "Last January, when the Kremlin began raving against the Moscow doctors, the Germans were delighted. Not because the Soviets had turned anti-Semitic, but because Stalin, like Hitler, was making the fatal error of attacking the omnipotent Jews. . . ."

KARL MARX [*sic!*], editor and publisher of Germany's most important Jewish newspaper, *Die Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland,* is a chubby, lion-maned little man, with an attractive English-speaking wife and a comfortable home in Düsseldorf with well-stocked library and cellar. He got away to England during the troubles. Now he and his weekly have been fighting for restitution, indemnification, and a virile Jewish community in the new Germany. I observed that his paper is "of the Jews in Germany," not "of the German Jews." He said, "That's the way we feel. There is too much we remember."

But the Germans have not forgotten, either. Marx thinks they have learned their lesson and will stand firm against all kinds of extremism. "Over half of our 16,000 domestic subscribers are non-Jews. In the past eight years, despite my many sharp attacks, I've had only four poison-pen letters: two were from the same individual, who turned out to be crazy, and the other two were anonymous. But hundreds of cordial letters came in from Christians after Bonn decorated me for working to improve German-Jewish relations. Former Hitler Youth students at the university visit our archives for material to use in dissertations on Jewish subjects. There's a real cult of Israel. We showed that film, *Tent City,* to all the schools. Tremendous impression. I lectured on Israel in a church for forty-five minutes—and the question period lasted three hours more. Neo-Nazism hasn't a chance. Many Germans will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tell you that if Hitler had befriended the Jews he might have won the war." (There it was *again!*)

Marx takes a cheerful view of Jewry's future here. "Not everyone has settled down overseas, you know. Only yesterday there was a delegation of Tel Aviv lawyers investigating the feasibility of coming back. Jewish students are in German universities again. People keep drifting back—from Israel, from South Africa, from South America, yes, even some from the United States. The DP camps have almost disappeared, but the Jewish population in the cities has actually grown. The future community will have to be quite different from the old—proud and more vigilant as Jews. Contrary to what everyone thought in 1945, Hitler did not write the last chapter."

SOME Jews here may not agree with Marx on their community's bright prospects, but they do not see why world Jewry should go out of its way to dim them. Organized German Jewry is hopping mad over the distribution of proceeds from the settlements with the Germans on heirless Jewish property and other claims.

Hendrik G. van Dam, executive secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, is the angriest of all, and doesn't mind being quoted. His chief abomination is the "Jewish Restitution Successor Organization." This outfit was created in 1948, with approval and support of the American military, to represent the major international Jewish organizations in disposal of pre-war community and private unclaimed or heirless Jewish property in the United States Zone. Normally, heirless property reverts to the state, but a government succeeding Hitler's regime obviously could not (and did not) have such pretensions. The JRSO was to arrange settlements, take court action when necessary, sell or otherwise dispose of titles, and serve as instrument for distribution of the ensuing funds.

According to van Dam, this was an iniquitous arrangement to begin with, and is even more evilly implemented. The JRSO, operating out of Nuremberg, reports to a board of directors in New York. "We have a couple of votes on the board, but they don't even give us the fare as far as New York so that we can have our say." He agrees that the money should be used for the common good of world Jewry, that much of it should go to Israel and other places outside of Germany, and that the shrunken communities are hardly entitled to a major share of what the dead left behind. "But this property, after all, is *German* Jewish. The least we have a right to ask is a fair share to meet our present needs, and to be decently included in consultations on where the rest should go."

I said I understood that the JRSO had made cash grants and also given some revenue-earning property back to the various *Gemeinden*. "Yes, under pressure, a few communities agreed to accept JRSO settlements in the early period because they were afraid that otherwise they'd get nothing at all. But Frankfort, Nuremberg, Fürth, and Augsburg held out, and Augsburg has just won a decision against JRSO in two German courts. For all our old people, our sick people, our unemployed, the JRSO grants are hopelessly inadequate. The proof of it is that, although the Joint Distribution Committee gives additional help in some communities, we still have to go hat in hand to the German authorities.

"I don't blame the American authorities," van Dam went on. "They thought they were doing the right thing in a complicated situation. But I do blame the Jewish organizations—and most of all I blame the officials of JRSO. While we in the Central Council barely exist on a JRSO dole, they drive around in great limousines. And they treat us like colonials. The trouble with these men is that they still feel and act like liberators." So much for their side of the story—no doubt, the JRSO officials, when we see them, will have considerations to balance off this heated view.

BONN (end of August): The Number 2 man of the neo-Nazi Deutsche Reichspartei was given a very hard time when he faced a roomful of reporters today. Two days ago the Interior Ministry of North-Rhine Westphalia ruled that, according to law, Werner Naumann, protegé of the late Joseph Goebbels, was barred from candidacy on the DRP or any other ticket because he was a top-grade un-de-Nazified Nazi. This afternoon DRP deputy August von Thadden called a press conference in the Parliament building to protest this "undemocratic" act.

The non-German correspondents present didn't have to say a word. As soon as Thadden finished his cocky opening statement, the German reporters began firing a barrage of ques-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions tending to prove him a liar and imbecile. Before long each question became a speech and the press conference a debate. Times have changed since the long night of Hitlerism descended on German journalism.

It might almost be said that reporters go too far when press conferences turn into brawls. Also, how brave is it, after all, to bully a small-fry opponent of the regime in power? At one point the unhappy Thadden blurted out that the hue and cry against ex-Nazis was raised only against persons who were *not* members of the three "respectable" government coalition parties. The reporters demanded to know just whom he meant, but he declined to name names.

PRIVATE interview with Theodor Heuss, President of the West Germany Bundesrepublik. Tall, deep-voiced, white-haired, chain smoker of cigars, Foxy Grandpa type, obviously a kind and genial man—and rather oddly located in the same FDP which puts up people like Wehrmacht ex-generals for election.

The President did not think there was any danger of extremist reaction in the future Germany. "And if there is," he added brightly, "it won't hurt the Jews. There will be too few of them here, not enough to be made scapegoats. It would be impossible to shift the blame to them the way Hitler did. I keep urging my Jewish friends to return, not to leave Germany isolated.

"Believe me, the German people are ashamed. I have said it openly, and I say it again: I reject the theory of collective guilt but I affirm the fact of collective shame. Many of us, including myself, did not know about Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen until it was all over—but we should not, and we do not, act as if we did not know. We must never forget how monstrously many Germans conducted themselves in Germany's name."

I asked him about the Israel Mission in Cologne, which enjoys such semi-diplomatic privileges as couriers, a code, exemption from taxes, but abstains from accepting full diplomatic status.

"It depends on Israel," Heuss said. "We are ready to establish formal relations as soon as they wish it. But we understand how they feel, and we are not pressing. I was eager to receive Mr. Shinar, the Mission chief. He was reluctant at first, not knowing how his government would take it. Later he came, though unofficially. Nahum Goldmann I have known for forty years, since he was a student and I a young journalist—and it was a great pleasure for me to have him visit me here. I look forward to attending the celebration in honor of Israel's Martin Buber soon in Frankfort. The German publishers are giving him an award for his work in the cause of peace. He is a great and saintly man."

THE single thorniest issue in Jewish-German relations right now is what to do with the "illegals" from Israel. About 700 of them have made their way to Foehrenwald, the last of the DP camps, near Munich. Most of them got transit visas to neighboring countries, then crossed the German border. They're called "returnees," but they are not German Jews. The only element of "return" is that they may have started from a German camp when they originally left for Israel. Some were never in Germany at all. They are drawn here because more agencies and machinery for emigration are located in Germany than anywhere else in Europe. They've heard that wandering Jews can get cash support from these agencies and even from the German authorities, and maybe earn a little money on the side too.

Well, the Germans have been objecting. So have the Jewish organizations. The Germans, naturally, dislike paying out the customary refugee dole and harboring a growing number of people who, they say, have no right to be in the country.

From the official Jewish point of view, the whole idea of an exodus from Israel towards Germany is simply intolerable. The JDC at first refused to give any cash assistance, and lately the German police have begun arresting returnees. Three have been deported to Austria. In turn, the illegals last month invaded the JDC offices on Siebertstrasse in Munich and "occupied" the premises overnight, demanding cash and protection.

On August 9, representatives of the World Jewish Congress, the Israel Purchasing Mission, the JDC, and the German Foreign Office met in Geneva. They agreed on a proposal by Nahum Goldmann that anybody reaching Foehrenwald before August 17 should be unmolested and given support; that the Foehrenwald returnees be transferred to a former German army barracks in Munich known as the Funkkaserne; that maximum efforts be made during the next six months to dispose of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the group by emigration—*and* that all later returnees be treated with the full rigor of German law, the right of the authorities to do so being expressly recognized by the Jewish organizations. This last point has caused considerable uneasiness outside Germany, since it suggests the abdication of organized Jewry's right to intercede for any Jew anywhere at any time. Meanwhile the returnees have kept coming, despite an Israeli press campaign to discourage them.

THE whole problem was reviewed at a formal conference in the Parliament building under Foreign Office chairmanship. Looking very formal myself, I crashed the meeting just by taking a seat on the Jewish side of the large horseshoe table and earnestly commencing to doodle on a sheet of paper. Quite a scene, this parley of Germans and Jews. Everyone at the head of the table was German except Yachil, deputy chief of the Purchasing Mission (another example of Bonn's tendency to bestow diplomatic rank on the Israelis by inference). On the right side were state-government representatives from Bavaria, which pays 15 per cent of German costs for refugees. On the left sat van Dam, speaking for all German Jewry; Weinberger, president of the associated Bavarian Jewish communities; Sam Haber, American JDC director for Germany and Austria; Jerry Kolieb, British director for HIAS in Germany; Israel Jacobson, American HIAS European director—and I.

For most of the meeting, the issue was the Funkkaserne. Weinberger led the fight against it, assisted by van Dam: the Funkkaserne lacks necessary installations (a school for the children, kitchens, etc.) that are available at Foehrenwald, so why leave the one for the other? Foehrenwald can house families, while the barracks will force three families into one room. Walls and bars shut the Funkkaserne in, a very unfortunate and ominous kind of installation in which to put Jews. Parts of the barracks are already occupied by Letts, Poles, and other DP's, most of whom were used in Nazi times as SS auxiliaries—it is inhumane to ask Jews to live with such people.

To this, von Schmoller, the chief Foreign Office spokesman, politely but firmly replied that the Funkkaserne was in the Geneva agreement—let us limit ourselves, gentlemen, to practical ways of putting that instrument into effect. The Bavarians brought out blueprints to show how the barracks could already take 60 families (there are 150 families and 200 singles) and be quickly remodeled to accommodate the rest at the opposite end of the camp from non-Jewish inmates. At one point Weinberger—significantly, as it turned out—noted that it would really be unfortunate to forget humanitarian considerations, in view of the "broad political aspects" of the problem—meaning what world opinion would think of Bonn. Suddenly, after about two hours of this, the Germans suggested a recess.

When we reconvened, von Schmoller, to our great surprise, said let's not move the refugees just now; it's too close to the High Holidays; we'll have another meeting afterward and take a fresh look. In other words, a mysterious and complete reversal of the previous German position. Why? One of the Americans told me later he thought Weinberger's reference to world opinion had done it. Another explanation was that the Germans put up a big fight for the Funkkaserne just as a bargaining tactic, intending all along to make this large "concession" and thus impel the Jewish organizations to counter this generosity by greater efforts than ever for total emigration.

Unhappily, I gather, the trouble is not that emigration efforts are lagging, but that visas to the United States and other receiving countries are so hard to get. This is the real problem and without a solution for it the returnee crisis is likely to wax rather than wane.

FRANKFORT, September 5: Tonight, election eve, was the first time I heard a remark with anti-Semitic overtones. It came from a leftist group, the Gesamte Deutsche Volkspartei, a minor faction somewhere between the Socialists and Communists—and from a clergyman, *Pfarrer* Mochalski, adjutant to Pastor Niemoeller. This outfit, which drew a small crowd this evening to a "theater in the round" where circuses ordinarily perform, uses slogans like "Germany for the Germans!" The speeches all urged Bonn to negotiate with the Russians, the audience not to die to save GI's. Loudest applause came when Mochalski cried: "Yes, we are grateful to America for the help which came during 1945-48, when Germany was prostrate and hungry. But not to the American government! It was American Christians, the American churches which saved us, while Washington was supporting the Morgenthau Plan for Germany's annihilation!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The future of most of German Jewry may be anticipated in microcosm here in Frankfort. Before Hitler, the State of Hesse had some 300 Jewish communities. At liberation there were sixteen. It takes at least ten Jews in a town—a *minyan*—to make a formal *Gemeinde*. Today, instead of sixteen communities, ten remain. And more will disappear as the years pass.

There are about 1,000 Jews in Frankfort, 700 to 800 in the rest of Hesse. A fair number to build with, one might think. But the age spread is deadly. Only six children were left when the Nazis finished with the Jews. As in most other places where *German* Jews predominate, the majority are old, on the way out, leaving nobody behind. The reason chiefly is that so many were at Theresienstadt, the Nazis' model camp where—unlike the other extermination *Lager*—it was the old who survived and the young who died.

And the few new children who get born? More often than not they spring from mixed marriages, and are not likely to be reared as Jews. Community leaders predict that organized Jewry can escape extinction in Hesse only by a new influx of refugees from Eastern Europe or by the return of German Jews from overseas. The first possibility is shrouded in a thousand political uncertainties; the second is extremely remote, nearly all who might be expected to return—for reasons of compensation claims, property restitution, inability to settle down abroad, or simple fatigue—having already come "home."

So I find no one here who shares the view of Editor Marx in Düsseldorf. On the other hand, only a few of those who returned, or survived the death camps, or emerged from the cellars and walled-up rooms of Nazi cities, are leaving Germany. Many thought they might go after settling their restitution claims. There is now a uniform indemnification law for the whole Bonn Republic. But sizeable sums cannot be taken from the country. Pensions may be sent abroad only up to 300 marks (around $74) a month. The rest is frozen. The older people are too tired or broken to pull up stakes. The younger—if they have established a business, a professional niche, or some other means of livelihood, and most of them have—don't want to risk the unknown outside.

They sometimes stop and think about the unknown within, of course. But fatalism seems to push the fear away. Jewish influence on developments in Germany has been wiped out, they say; we are powerless to affect events, helpless before forces beyond our control; and is it really safer anywhere else in this hate-filled world?

Meanwhile life goes on—with nobody looking beyond the next five years or ten.

I HOPE someone will come along soon to dig deeply into the story of Joseph Klibansky, who has just been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment and a $4,500 fine after conviction on charges of being "accessory" to violations of corporation law and foreign-exchange controls on the part of the former so-called "Jewish Restitution Bank," of which he was legal counsel. The trial lasted ten months and 125 witnesses were heard. But a careful check may demonstrate—as I, on the basis of admittedly superficial inspection, think it will—that Klibansky is a brilliant, sincere Jew who is being dragged down by the vengefulness of ex-Nazis and the false shame of apathetic fellow Jews. If so, this will be a matter for world outcry. It may be another Auerbach Case—only worse, because this time there is at least the Auerbach precedent, with all the hideous doubts which followed Auerbach's suicide.

Nearly everyone agrees that the sentence is excessive, even if Klibansky is guilty. Nearly everyone agrees, too, that he showed bad judgment—at the very least—in associating closely with a private bank that had shady promoters, adopted a misleading name, and facilitated the transfer abroad (allegedly at a considerable discount) of blocked funds received as compensation by victims of Nazism. Otherwise there is wide divergence about the facts. In his native Frankfort, Klibansky is regarded by Jews with admiration bordering on awe. Elsewhere, I have heard even responsible Jewish leaders speak of him uneasily as an "adventurer." The man clearly has a controversial reputation. But he is also undeniably the most eloquent trial lawyer in Germany today, a master of judicial procedure, the terror of inept opponents and prejudiced benches, with an incredibly high record of triumphant Supreme Court appeals in reversal of lower-court decisions. Even his strongest detractors are convinced that the proceedings against him were motivated by professional jealousy and the vindictiveness of judges. He has left a loophole, they say, and his enemies have poured through it. Also, it is intimated, the chase is spurred by Klibansky's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self-assertive but fearless defense of Jews and Jewishness. He is active in Jewish causes, he is the only lawyer in Germany who refuses to transact business on the Sabbath, and he has been known to put on a *yarmelke* in public places. Some Jews complain that he goes too far and positively "flaunts" his Jewishness in German faces. I cannot blink away as irrelevant the fact that the prosecuting attorney in the Klibansky case was also prosecuting Jews between 1933 and 1939 for the "crime" of trying to get their possessions out of Hitler's Reich, and that the chief judge of the court which convicted Klibansky was jailed as a Nazi by the occupation authorities, then "de-Nazified," but as recently as 1951 was distinguishing himself by virulent, jingoistic declarations from the bench.

I ALSO cannot shrug off the impression Klibansky made on me during a two-hour interview in his offices. Here was a man against whom action for disbarment may soon be started by the *Avokatenkammer,* and who sometime in 1954 will present his appeal before the Supreme Court against a verdict which means prison and ruin. Yet not once did he speak of his private problem—only of the Jewish community in Germany, its relations with other Jewries, the need for vigilance against neo-Nazi termites who, he says, infest the whole structure of German "democracy." All this he expressed in a fluent French, accented but eloquent, which he acquired while an inmate of a Vichy internment camp. Curiously, Klibansky in physical appearance is almost a caricature of the comic-page German whom he despises: bald head, a neck encased in fat, beer-barrel belly. His friends tell me he has a bad heart, bad kidneys, diabetes. They say the anguish and exertion he is now undergoing may kill him even if he wins his case. During our talk he kept gulping down pills and medicines. Certainly not a prepossessing person physically. But when he began to speak, even in a language foreign to him, he was transformed. I came away more than half persuaded that Klibansky has qualities of greatness. If so, it is clear why smaller men should misunderstand him and his enemies should unite to bring him down.

There is more involved here than the fate of one man. Because of the peculiarly Jewish context of this affair, Klibansky's treatment affects Jewry's position in Germany and is therefore a matter of concern to Jews everywhere.

O. M., OF the liberal *Frankfurter Rundschau,* nodded his head wearily when I said his newspaper ought to hammer away at things like the ex-Nazi color of the German magistracy. "We do," he said, "but how long can we go on writing about it? Nobody seems to mind. You lose readers every time you write about Nazis. There's another trouble: what would you replace the Nazis with? I remember one case where the JDC unofficially protested at the appointment of a Nazi as schoolteacher. The authorities said they'd put in any competent substitute if he could be produced. Well, nobody was available with the proper credentials who had *not* been a party man."

THE election results have caused satisfaction among Frankfort Jews. This despite the fact that many lean toward the Social Democrats, who were defeated. "The one bad thing about the Adenauer victory," I was informed, "is that it means Germany will have an army. From your American viewpoint this is good for NATO and bad for the Russians. Maybe so. We remember enough history to be unhappy about a remilitarized Germany. In the long run it has always strengthened the right wing—and from right wing to anti-Semitism isn't far around here." Others were troubled by the setback to the Socialists because they were the party that voted solidly for the Israel reparations pact; the victorious coalition contained waverers and opponents. "Also, it's not too good to have one man—even if he's Adenauer—so dominant in a country like this."

Against these reservations, however, has to be reckoned the genuine relief, and even surprise, over the abysmal showing of the extremist groups. The prevailing mood, for the present, is that a country which can vote as soberly as Germany did last Sunday is not too bad a risk.

BERLIN, September 9: Rosh Hashanah at the Pestalozzi-strasse Temple. The *Gemeinde* here not yet having a resident rabbi, the JDC has brought over Dr. Hermann Schreiber (formerly of Potsdam) from a synagogue in London to officiate during the High Holidays. The JDC also printed 2,000 handsome prayerbooks to replace those destroyed by the Nazis, and helped finance the restoration of the damaged interior. Tonight was the dedicatory service, the first since the repairs. It is a little synagogue, but a jewel.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The place was packed. All seats had been reserved weeks ago. The *Gemeinde* president, Heinz Galinski, installed a chair for me at the near end of the women's gallery, where I was only slightly less conspicuous than three Jewish GI's from our Berlin garrison sitting in a back row with overseas caps perked on their heads. With the prayers, there was some fine singing by a young cantor, a mixed choir helping robustly from a concealed alcove above and behind the tabernacle. Then a few speeches of dedication: Galinski spoke movingly of the reborn community's future. An elder of the community, who had served as lay *Prädiger* when there was no rabbi, gave a warm address of welcome to Dr. Schreiber. The *gabbe,* as *gabbes* must, also spoke a few words, reading with dignity from a piece of paper. Then the rabbi arose to deliver his sermon.

I missed the Hebrew of his text, but the German was *"Bisher hat uns Gott geholfen"* running like a refrain as he catalogued the disasters which have befallen Jewry, after each disaster salvation coming or at least something to be thankful for, each time proving that "until now hath the Almighty aided us." I could not suppress the perhaps irreverent thought that this, of all congregations, should hardly be expected to admit such an interpretation of the years 1933-45.

But it was the congregation itself which, for me, made this night so memorable. The last-ditch survivors of a great multitude, of the 200,000 Jews in Hitler's Berlin. Each of them surely carrying a past heavy with anguish. Yet there they were, so real, so decorous, so very much themselves again, the women tastefully dressed, with a certain flair, the men, young and old, in neat dark suits and homburgs, looking so strangely familiar, until it occurred to me that of course, this is how they were looking tonight in the Emanu-Els or Rodeph Sholoms of America too. These were the same people, except for the accident of geography. They were tranquil, I suppose, because the nightmare and the miracle were an old and submerged memory to them, but on me the impact of their physical reality was so poignant that a lump came into my throat.

Later, with a young Berliner who had escaped to Shanghai before the war, I went to dine on the Kurfürstendamm. We chose the Café Wien, which has lately been restored to its Jewish proprietors. Just as we came in the orchestra burst out with *"Eli, Eli."*

SPENT three hours in Soviet Berlin today, inspecting flats in the huge block of new "workers' apartments" on Stalinallee (scene of the June uprisings), chatting with salespeople in bookstores and shops, eating a "people's lunch" in a cooperative, and noticing that the big posters and billboards no longer aggressively attack Wall Street, as they did the last time I was here, but defensively insist that East Germans are unflaggingly loyal to Pieck and Grotewohl.

I made no attempt to seek out Jews in the Eastern sector. It might have embarrassed somebody, though I understand secondhand that the three present leaders of the *Gemeinde* are party stalwarts (named Rothman, Heilbronn, Bendit) beyond embarrassment. When the real leaders panicked after the Prague trial and fled to West Berlin, the Communists installed this "trustworthy" triumvirate, which has reportedly turned the community into an administrative branch of the regime. Each of the three carefully watches the others, and nothing is decided without consent from HQ. To be on the safe side, even the community mail is taken to party offices to be opened. Welfare applicants are told that the party, not the *Gemeinde,* assures the welfare of the people. It seems clear, however, that there is no active anti-Semitism. Old people's and children's homes near Pankow are operating unmolested. Only last Saturday the big synagogue on Rykestrasse was reopened after repairs whose cost the East German government helped defray.

Weissensee, the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe, is in the Eastern sector. West Berlin Jews are not allowed to visit it. This arbitrary division of the two groups, unified until last January, is causing deep concern on the Western side. During the Great Fear about 600 came over. A *Flüchtlingsheim* was maintained for them until July. About 20 went to Israel, 325 were resettled in West Germany with JDC help, and housing in West Berlin was obtained for the rest, who receive a regular monthly stipend from the municipal government as political refugees, and have been more or less reintegrated. But nearly 2,000 still remain in East Berlin, and West Berlin Jewry has set up its own channels to keep them from total isolation. They use the Jewish hospital here. Forty of the 130 children who attended the JDC-sponsored summer camp at Wannsee were from the East. A *shochet* goes periodically into the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eastern sector. The people over there have been advised that they can get extra food and assistance from the *Gemeinde* here, and they come over when they can—it's something like the American food-package program.

In West Berlin the Jews have a functioning *Gemeinde,* no doubt of it. Five synagogues, from Liberal to Hasidic, four religious schools, a "Center" program of youth groups, discussion groups, lectures, a full array of communal welfare institutions.

Their chief concern is to instill a knowledge of Judaism in the new generation, to keep the *Gemeinde* truly Jewish, safe from the falling away which comes through lack of teaching. "We are desperately in need of rabbis," says Galinski. Hadn't a few foreign rabbis been sent in? "Yes, there was a Liberal one, from Cincinnati, but he was more interested in politics than in the synagogue, and we were glad to see him go. And there was an Orthodox one too, but he—the less said about him the better. Now we have Dr. Schneider, and also Dr. Broch from England for the Orthodox services, but they are staying only through the Holidays. Look, don't think us ungrateful. We've had wonderful help from America. But what good will it be in the end if our children are allowed to forget their identity? So we must go an appealing: Send us teachers. Send us food for the spirit."

Just back from an hour's visit with Jeannette Wolf, Socialist delegate from Berlin to the Bonn parliament. Frau Wolf also has a hand in activities of the *Gemeinde* Women's Branch. Aged about sixty, I'd say, but with more endurance than I. Her conversation was a harangue, and I came away exhausted. She translated each of my questions about Jewish matters into politics, and off she would go denouncing the government coalition and lauding her own party. Adenauer's bloc had been split on the Israel treaty, but the Socialists, "my party," she said proudly, voted for it 100 per cent. "Why, two of our members who were sick were carried from their beds and came to record their ballots." Then, as if to prove her case to the hilt: "Our Socialist caucus ruled that any deputy who did not attend and vote would be fined 20 marks."

If the government parties were so bad, I inquired, wouldn't she recommend that all the Jews leave Germany? Oh no, she cried, there is no danger here, because our Socialist movement is strong; the stronger it grows, the safer Jews will be. But, I persisted, why take the risk? Because, she said, the Jews are good frontline fighters for democracy, and we need them.

I much prefer the attitude of men like Galinski in Berlin, or Klibansky in Frankfort. They differ in their estimate of the anti-Semitic threat: Klibansky sees it coiling like a snake; Galinski thinks that Germany, having tried it once with such frightful consequences to herself as well as to the Jews, is the least likely country in the world to try again. But they both are convinced that the democratic struggle is an obligation upon Jews no less than upon other men, and *that* is why they want Jews and a Jewish community to stick it out here. "There is no place in the world to hide any more," says Galinski.

This is the moment to note the resentment many Jews here feel about organized Zionism's attitude. After the war, the leaders of the World Zionist Organization in effect tried to legislate German Jewry out of existence by prohibiting all official Zionist activity here, representation at international Zionist meetings through sale of *shekels,* etc. "This," it has been dryly pointed out to me, "did not stop Israel from taking up collections among us for Haganah, Youth Aliyah, Keren Kayemeth, and other drives. Our cash was kosher, but not our souls." Of course, it had been supposed that exodus was going to make Germany totally barren of Jews and that none would ever return. But the Zionist decision did imply a moral judgment: that any Jew who might show the bad taste to remain must be regarded as a pariah or Quisling.

I understand that now, finally, the Zionist executive is going to catch up with history and revise its stand. But the Jews here deeply resent the withholding of the moral support they felt they deserved from Israel in their own difficult position. Not important, but characteristic, they say, was the tendency of Israeli agencies to make commercial contracts in Germany even with ex-Nazi firms rather than with Jewish companies.

Munich (mid-September): As I suspected, the various sides of the dispute between German Jewry and the JRSO all seem to have a bit of right and a bit of wrong.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A basic difficulty was that JRSO got started too soon, in the DP era when few could have dreamed that in 1953 there would be dozens of functioning Jewish communities in post-Nazi Germany with large and legitimate communal needs. This mistake was not made in the British Zone. There the Jewish Trust Corporation waited until things settled down enough to indicate that Jews were going to be around in Germany for a long time. So, unlike JRSO, the organized communities of the British-controlled area were given a satisfactory representation on the Corporation, and *priority* for their claims on funds arising from disposal of heirless property, communal holdings, and other unclaimed assets.

It also seems true, as van Dam angrily told me in Düsseldorf, that some of the JRSO people have been somewhat less than tactful. I have read one or two official JRSO communications that betrayed the arrogant tone of that certain genus of "Jewish professional" one occasionally meets in America too—his original habitat, in fact. An unfortunate tendency can be noted in JRSO to dismiss the local leadership as a "damned nuisance."

On the other hand, there is reason to believe that some spokesmen for German Jewry also have a trace of the careerist about them. They are not entirely indifferent to the opportunities for empire-building when one can lay hold of enough money to finance beautiful budgets. The German court decisions against JRSO in the Augsburg case can give ambitious local leaders a golden occasion if the U. S. Court of Restitution Appeals sitting in Germany rejects the JRSO appeal, as many think it may.

The enlistment of a high-level arbiter whom the *Gemeinden* will trust, and then some earnest consultations under statesmanlike auspices, ought to be a prime order of current business for the international Jewish organizations involved.

All this apart, I must admit some perplexity over the fact that the Jewish Agency, which is after all really an extension of Israel, is slated for exceedingly substantial chunks of JRSO money, and even of the funds eventually to be paid by Germany under the agreement with the Conference for Material Claims. In the case of the latter payments, I had thought they were to be for the benefit of Jewish victims of Hitlerism residing *outside* Israel—the specifically Israeli claim having been presumably met by the separate German reparations agreement with Israel. The Agency undoubtedly can produce an argument, if pressed, to make it all seem reasonable and for the greatest good of the greatest number. But if there are ex-German Jews in London, for example, who are old and broken and in need of assistance, it does seem a bit difficult to understand why something like Jewish Agency expenses in Germany should have priority on the proceeds from the liquidation of German Jewish claims against the present German government.

ATTENDED a ceremony rededicating the mass grave of forty Jews who perished in the "Death March" of April 1945, when the SS emptied the concentration camps on the eve of Nazi defeat and tried to destroy the "evidence" by herding them in a pitiless procession toward the Tyrol. The grave is outside Wolfratshausen, and has been tidied up and improved by the inmates of nearby Foehrenwald. In fact, the whole project was conceived and voluntarily executed by the Foehrenwald people, and they formed the bulk of the mourners today. Dignitaries of the Munich *Gemeinde*, the Bavarian government, JDC, HIAS, the German Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, a non-sectarian "Freiheit und Recht" association, and others, lined up on three sides of the large, rectangular plot dominated by a black memorial stone inscribed in German and Hebrew, and bulwarked today with wreaths. The speeches were what might have been expected, tributes to the dead and pledges that their deaths would not be in vain. The representative of the Bavarian Ministry for Refugees apologized for his Ministry's failure to have previously known of the grave's existence (the Foehrenwalders discovered it), and he announced that its upkeep would henceforth be a solemn governmental charge. A small disturbance was caused by the spokesman for a Socialist faction in Foehrenwald. His oration, just before the *kaddish*, was delivered with uncovered head, to the visible shock and indignation of the Orthodox bystanders. Even the Wolfratshausen mayor, a peasant-politician type, wore a hat. In his speech, the mayor had seemed to be trying only to absolve himself of all responsibility for the martyrdom of the forty. "We were helpless to interfere," he pleaded. "And as soon as the killers passed, we hurried reverently to bury the dead." *"In d'rerd zol er ligen,"* muttered a little Foehrenwalder behind me. "The only reason they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

buried them was because they were afraid of an epidemic."

I SEE now why Foehrenwald attracts returnees from Israel, and why both the German authorities and the Jewish organizations want to close it down. It is not exactly a country club, this last existing Jewish DP camp in Germany, but it isn't a conglomeration of tin shacks in an Israeli *ma'abara* either. There are over 2,000 inmates, yet the place doesn't seem crowded. Something like a German village in the Balkans, with neatly laid streets and sturdy little stone houses. There are cafés, food stores, workshops, all operated by residents. A German civilian official administers the camp, and there is a nominal German police supervision at the entrance—but no suggestion of coercion. The busiest centers are the various offices of JDC for emigration and welfare. HIAS has its own separate bureau on the grounds and its own clients.

There are two major factions, and I talked at length with both. Adherents of one are known as the *vatikim,* the other as *chosrim.* The *vatikim* are the "Old Ones," the hard-core cases, the long-term residents who can't get visas to anywhere, and a few people who came back from Israel ahead of the big influx and managed to become "legal" because nobody foresaw what was to follow. Between the "Old Ones" and the *chosrim*—the "Ones Who Returned"—there is implacable hatred. A committee of the *vatikim* told me that until the *chosrim* started pouring in, Foehrenwald was fully recognized by the Bavarian government as entitled to maximum consideration; all kinds of plans were being discussed to resettle the inmates at German and JDC expenses either abroad or elsewhere in Germany; now these plans and the privileged status of the "Old Ones" have been jeopardized. Another grievance of the *vatikim* is aimed at world Jewry. "We are the tuberculars, the crippled, the worst *karbunim* of the Nazis, yet we and our sacrifices have been passed over."

The returnees, who have been taking quite a beating in the Hebrew and Yiddish press lately as despicable deserters from Israel, are understandably not very friendly toward world Jewry at this juncture either. I interviewed a committee of three *chosrim,* and each had a typical justification for having left Israel and come to Germany. The first said he had believed the Zionist propaganda, gone to Israel with his own funds, exhausted them trying to get started in a new life, and given up only after becoming convinced it was hopeless. The second said he had served two years in the Israeli army and come out to find that he could not get work in his specialized craft as pocketbook maker because the government was not importing leather for anything but shoes. When his wife sickened in their *ma'abara,* he decided it was time to go. The last and oldest of the three—and the only ex-German Jew among them—said he did have a job, and some sort of permanent housing, but five years of the cruel Israeli climate were more than he could bear and he had finally fled because he knew for certain that otherwise his years would be shortened. All three complained bitterly about the *vatikim,* who revile the *chosrim* (and occasionally get beaten up by the latter in exchange). The "Old Ones," say the returnees, talk about desertion from Israel, but what about *them*? Why don't *they* have a try at it? (This is a point: I asked the *vatikim* committee why their people didn't go to Israel, and they all replied in horror that conditions over there were frightful, why should they leave Foehrenwald for something worse, wasn't it their due to be sent to America or Canada or some other decent country where they could live in tranquillity after all their suffering?) The *chosrim* are also darkly incensed against the JDC, which has declined to give them equal subsidy with the old-timers, and in fact began by trying to ignore them entirely. "Are we less Jews than they?" they wanted me to explain. "When our children are hungry, is it a hunger different from other people's hunger? Is it a crime to ask only for a chance to live?"

I AM afraid I don't have the answer, and neither does genial little Sam Haber, the head JDC man here, or his executive staff, all of whom have been very hospitable—and patient with my incessant questioning—despite their own considerable burdens. It is undeniable that some of the *chosrim* are just spongers or worse. But it is also undeniable that not everybody is necessarily worthless if he finds himself unable to adjust to the conditions confronting newcomers in Israel. How far do you go to avoid encouraging departures from Israel, and at what point does even a chronic good-for-nothing adventurer become just another Jew who needs assistance? The JDC has been forced by the sheer weight of the problem

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slowly to reduce its resistance to granting aid.

Yesterday I sat in on a long "negotiating" session between a *chosrim* committee and Haber. This time, he told them, he was willing to give assistance to those who were not yet receiving some JDC help—but only on a case basis, by considering each need individually, which is the only way a welfare organization can and should operate. The returnee representatives as much as said they would not abet any attempt to find out which of their people had hidden funds or jobs. Their nervousness on this point seems to confirm the report that some of the *chosrim,* at least, have violent habits. In the end, both sides yielded. The committee agreed to cooperate, and Haber agreed to allocate a special, one-time Yom Kippur cash grant to everyone not on the relief lists.

The Germans are compromising, too. Today I saw Theodor Oberlaender, Bavarian State Secretary for Refugees. He is the local bigwig in the BHE, a party which has become a force in Federal politics because it is a catch-all group for the masses of Germans driven out of the satellite countries and East Germany.* Oberlaender admitted that his group has many ex-Nazis. "I'm one too," he added disarmingly. (A native of Silesia, he turned up in 1939 as a professor at Prague University.) "Our party is open to all who now see that the only way for Germany is democracy." Concerning the returnees, he said that Bavaria could not go on forever permitting illegal entrants to remain, nor could the German state extend to an increasing number of them the monthly relief stipend it customarily gives legitimate DP's of all faiths and origins. On the other hand, he pointed out, no returnee was being deported, "although we would have every international legal right to do so."

He had no comment to make on future policy. "We are abiding by the terms of the September conference in Bonn with the Jewish organizations." (This is not altogether true: nothing yet is being done to clear the police records of returnees who had been arrested, or to give them the right to work until they can emigrate, as agreed.) "We are depending on the Jewish organizations to find the maximum amount of visas. We must wait and see." Which, in view of the slow rate of emigration from Foehrenwald and the continued hard times in Israel, leaves the problem just about where it was when I arrived a month ago.†

SALZBURG, Austria, late September: My last afternoon in Germany I went on pilgrimage to Dachau. One American sergeant and his *Fraülein,* and two German families spending Sunday in the country, were the only other visitors. I saw the gas vents in the "shower room" and the huge ovens in the crematory and the tree from which the noose had hung and the wall where the firing squads took aim and the trough where the blood ran and the mass graves for the bones. Everything is carefully labeled. Arrows tell you exactly where to begin your tour and in which direction to progress. It is easier to see everything than to imagine how it must have been. . . .

*In October, Oberlaender became Bonn Minister for Refugees in the new Adenauer government.

†A dispatch from Munich early in November reported the arrest in one day of 67 illegal returnees from Israel who, after a court hearing, were being jailed, and subsequently would be expelled from the country, the authorities said. The returnees pleaded they could not adapt themselves to conditions in Israel and had come back to try to emigrate to North or South America.—ED.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ISSUE BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Facing Up to the Unresolvable Difference

JACOB TAUBES

FOR all the current popularity of the term "Judeo-Christian" tradition, the differences between the Jewish and Christian religions are not at all resolved. They are basic, and their consequences still influence every moment of our lives. True, the immediate and more pressing issues in Jewish-Christian relations are social and political, but this does not justify postponing an examination of the fundamental issue, which is theological—and from which all the social and political questions spring originally.

As long as a clear awareness existed of the basic theological differences between Judaism and Christianity there was no great need to argue the matter explicitly. But in the last twenty years it has become fashionable to gloss over and distort these differences. Now we need to restate them. Nor need we be afraid to. There is warrant for believing that, even in the sphere of the "practical," we have more to gain by defining and understanding the issues involved than by obscuring them and pretending they do not exist.

FOR centuries the controversy between Jewish religion and Christian dogma had for its frame the historical victory of the Christian church. All that the church required of the synagogue was that she admit her defeat. If necessary, the church could always appeal to the secular arm of the state to end the argument.

The magic spell of Christianity's historical success remains, though the church no longer uses the sword to decide her dispute with the synagogue, and this spell still constrains the Jewish-Christian dialogues of our time. Its influence can be seen in the exchange of letters between Franz Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock, in the dialogue between the Protestant theologian Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Martin Buber, and in the dispute between the Christian ideologue of anti-Semitism, Hans Blüher, and the Prussian Jew Hans Joachim Schoeps. The fact that the history of the nations unfolded under the triumph of the cross (though only in the West) has for Franz Rosenzweig and Hans Joachim Schoeps, as to lesser degree for Martin Buber, a weight and relevance that seem to me to be fatal to any claim that might be made for their thought as *Jewish* theology.

A sober analysis of the Jewish-Christian controversy must set aside the argument from history, which embodies a dangerous temptation to take what *is* for what *ought to be*. After all, how can history "decide" in matters of theology? And, especially, what

---

THE argument between Judaism and Christianity, JACOB TAUBES here points out, is generally distorted by the historical success of Christianity. But success and truth belong to quite different realms; here, at a time when there are attempts on both sides to obscure the fundamental theological difference between the two faiths, the ancient disputation is once again canvassed, without regard for the fact that Christianity spread throughout the world while Judaism remained the religion of a small people; and from this discussion some clarifying —though old—facts emerge. Mr. Taubes was born in Vienna in 1924, and received his doctorate in philosophy and theology from the University of Zurich. He has been a fellow at the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and is now a Rockefeller Fellow at Harvard University. He has written one book, *Abendländische Eschatologie,* and many articles for journals of philosophy, and is now at work on a study of "political theology" which will deal with various neglected relations between theology and political theory.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can historical success prove for a religion like Christianity that claims to be not of this world and heralds the end of history?

Nor is *this* a time for the Christian church to use the argument from history. From the viewpoint of worldly success, do we not stand on the threshold of a post-Christian era, when Christian symbols and dogmas have begun to look as antiquated as the Old Testament seemed in the Christian era? And indeed, looking at the present spiritual situation, it is most probable that the age to come will shape its religious forms in a way equally remote from both Jewish and Christian patterns. Be that as it may, the historical argument is certainly two-edged. There is a good deal of irony in the fact that, whereas Christian theologians today steer clear of the "proof" from history (warned off by such a critic as Nietzsche's friend, Franz Overbeck), Jewish thinkers like Hans Joachim Schoeps and Will Herberg have become so spellbound by Christianity's historical success that they try to give it a "theological" justification.

THE issue between the Christian and Jewish religions starts from the Christian side. According to Christian doctrine, the Jewish people are an integral part of the Christian history of salvation. The synagogue is, in the eyes of the early church fathers, the shadow of the body of the church. Christian theology views the history of mankind as a progressive covenant between God and man. The covenant begins with Adam and manifests itself in different stages: from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to David, from David to the son of David "who is the Christ." In the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ, the covenant is made final. The last step in the covenant between God and man, according to Christian theology, is the incarnation of God in the Son of Man. The history of Israel prefigures the story of redemption; the events recorded in the Old Testament do not contain their ultimate meaning in themselves, but point beyond themselves: the death of Abel, the sacrifice of Isaac, the kingdom of David, the Temple in Jerusalem prefigure the life and death of Jesus the Christ, as well as the history of the church.

The Jewish people, however, not only "prefigure" the story of redemption, but are an active "figure" in the drama of salvation. The fundamental statement in the Gospel according to St. John—"for salvation is of the Jews"—does not, according to Christian theology, refer to past history or to the mere "racial" fact that Jesus the Christ and his first disciples were of Jewish origin; it points rather to the essential role of Israel in that drama of salvation which the first theologian of the Christian community described in his Epistle to the Romans: Has Israel stumbled that it should fall? Paul denies this, interpreting the refusal of the Jewish community to accept Jesus as the Christ as part of the universal drama of redemption: Israel's rejection of Jesus made it possible for salvation to come to the Gentile nations. Israel became an enemy of Jesus Christ, writes Paul to the Christian community in Rome, *"for your sakes—."*

In other words, Paul can call the Jewish destiny a mystery because the role of the Jewish people is mysteriously interwoven with the role of the redeemer in the Christian drama of redemption. The Jewish synagogue refuses Jesus as the Christ, but this refusal is essential to universal redemption. The dark and mysterious "necessity," according to Paul, of the Jewish people in the drama of redemption affords no reason for Gentile self-gratulation or for condemnation of Israel. The Gentile nations should remember that the Jewish people are the natural branches of the tree of redemption, whose "root" is Israel's history. The Gentile nations were grafted onto the tree of redemption "contrary to nature," and shall be cut off if they fail in their faith in Christ. Let the Jews only not persist in their refusal of Jesus as the Christ, and how much more shall they, who are the natural branches of the tree of redemption, adorn and make part of it.

However, the key sentence, "for salvation is of the Jews," must be read in the context

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Johannine Gospel's violent attack on the synagogue. (Some serious writers on the Johannine Gospel, such as Rudolf Bultmann, the German theologian, think the clause is a gloss, since it does not accord with that dominant tendency of the Gospel which has led some Protestant commentators to call it the most anti-Jewish pamphlet ever to have appeared.) The Johannine Christ denies that Jews and Christians have one Father in God; the Jews, in refusing to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, serve the "Devil." They do not know God the Father since they do not acknowledge the divine Son in Jesus.

But *from the Jewish point of view*, the division of the divinity into "Father" and "Son" splits the divine essence; it was, and is, regarded by the synagogue quite simply as blasphemy. The doctrine of the synagogue and the Gospel according to St. John both "agree" as to what they regard as the basic point at issue, the heart of the argument, even if they arrive at opposite conclusions.

To sum up the Christian argument then: the Jewish people have a definite role in the Christian drama of salvation. Israel's history is the "root" of the tree of redemption, Israel serving in its denial of Jesus as the Christ as a negative but necessary element in the process of salvation.

IF ONE accepts my description of the Christian "economy of salvation," I think that my statement of the basic Jewish premise can be readily understood: the Christian religion in general, and the body of the Christian church in particular, is of no *religious* relevance to the Jewish faith. There is a Jewish "mystery" for the church, but there is no Christian "mystery" for the synagogue. Christian history can have no religious significance of any kind for the Jewish creed; nor can the division of historical time into "B.C." and "A.D." be recognized by the synagogue. More than that, it cannot even be recognized as something which, though meaningless for the Jewish people, represents truth for the rest of the world.

This basic Jewish premise was obscured when Franz Rosenzweig, introducing a new "theological" notion into Jewish thought, interpreted the coming of Jesus as having a Messianic significance for the Gentile nations, but not for the Jewish people. Rosenzweig based his theological *tour de force* on a bold reading of a fundamental *logion* of the Johannine Christ: "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (14:6). The history of the nations is, according to Rosenzweig, the "way" to the divine fulfillment, and this "way" to the Father leads for the Gentiles through Jesus the Christ. No man "cometh," as Rosenzweig emphasized, into the divine covenant but through the Son of God—except the Jewish nation whom God "elected" from its very beginning to make a covenant with.

The election of Israel—which is a Christian article of faith, too—implies that Israel does not march along the eternal way of history, but stands in the eternal presence of the covenant with God. The life of Israel in the divine covenant is the eternal life. Till the end of history, so argues Rosenzweig, the "eternal life" (the transhistorical destiny of Israel) and the "eternal way" (the historical destiny of the Gentile nations in Jesus Christ) are divided. Only at the end of days, when the Son of God shall deliver up the "Kingdom" to God and lay aside all his power and authority, shall the eternal life and the eternal way come together; Israel shall cease to be the holy nation living in the eternal divine presence only when Christ shall cease to rule over the eternal way of the nations.

The Christian church, says Rosenzweig, must understand that it is the essence of the mystery of salvation that the Jews shall remain separate so long as Christ does not deliver up his authority to God the Father. Through Paul, the church became the church of the nations. According to Rosenzweig, it is both anachronistic and contradictory for the church to wish to see the Jews converted: anachronistic, because it implies a return to the pre-Pauline situation; contradictory, because Christian escha-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tology places the conversion of the Jews at the end of time, beyond history.

I do not deny the grandeur of Rosenzweig's interpretation. Yet it seems to me a dubious thing to make Rosenzweig's highly doubtful reading of a *Christian* text the basis for the doctrine of the synagogue. What Rosenzweig is expressing here is his own spiritual biography: *his* return to Judaism started from a point on the borderline between the two faiths, when he was just about to cross over to the church. However much personal validity Rosenzweig's interpretation may have, it is theologically irrelevant. It is only too obvious that his "theological" arguments do violence to the spirit of the Gospel according to St. John, and that Jesus of the Fourth Gospel offers the weakest possible basis for the view he advances.

Rosenzweig's dichotomy between nations that are on the "way" through Jesus the Christ and "come" into the divine covenant, and a Jewish people that "are" already in the divine covenant, contradicts the whole Johannine scheme of salvation. John denies the Jewish people any knowledge of God, insisting that only through the Son could the Jews have known the Father (8:19). Moreover, the same sentence that calls Jesus Christ the "way" (which is the basis of Rosenzweig's speculation about the division between the "eternal way" and the "eternal life") also calls Christ the life: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. . . ." I do not understand how Jesus can be conceded to be the Christ in Rosenzweig's halfway fashion: how can Jesus be the Messiah come to redeem the nations, but not the Jewish people? Rosenzweig categorically denies that Jesus has any Messianic significance for the Jewish people, and denies even the significance for the Jewish people of Messianic redemption in general (since Israel exists outside the Messianic dialectic of history); but under the spell of the success of the church in the Western world, he raises Christianity's mundane history, in the fashion of his master Hegel, to the level of the divine.

Even as speculation, Rosenzweig's argument has a glaring weakness: Islam. He treats Islam, which made its appearance centuries after the advent of Christianity, in exactly the same way as such Protestant scholars of the New Testament era as Schuerer and Weber treated the period of "late Judaism" in the time of Jesus—that is, as an irritating supererogation. A thorough analysis would show that Rosenzweig was a captive of the Protestant vocabulary, the only difference being that where the Protestant scholars say "rabbinic theology," he says the Islamic religion. Since Islam hardly counts as a social factor in the West, and there was no group to take up the cudgels on its behalf, Rosenzweig's caricature of Islam could pass. Will Herberg, accepting Rosenzweig's view of Islam, calls it a "kind of Jewish-Christian heresy." This summary disposal of a world religion follows readily enough from Mr. Herberg's (highly private) conception of a Jewish-Christian "orthodoxy." Yet Islam, because it claims only the title of *prophet* for Mohammed, is much more the complement (less heretical!) of Judaism than is Christianity.

I shouldn't have criticized Rosenzweig on this point if his example had not given the lead to other Jewish writers. Hans Joachim Schoeps states that, from a Jewish point of view, "perhaps [?] no Gentile can come to God the Father otherwise than through Jesus Christ." Will Herberg is convinced that it is sound Jewish doctrine to assert that Israel can bring the world to God only (!) through Christianity. I cannot help asking: who informed Mr. Schoeps and Mr. Herberg that the Gentile nations have no way but the Christian one to salvation? Israel can acknowledge *prophets* to the nations and of the nations. But to posit an event that has Messianic significance for the Gentiles yet does not touch Israel is absurd, and "arranges" a *rapprochement* between Christians and Jews somewhat too neatly.

On the Christian side again, I cannot see what justifies Rosenzweig's and Schoeps's assumption that Paul's Epistle to the Ro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mans—especially chapters 9 to 11, which are the basis for my description of the Christian attitude to the Jews—constitutes no Christian dogma, but is rather Paul's subjective opinion. Karl Barth bases his remarkable description of the Jews in the light of Christian dogma entirely on these chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and the Catholic church declared as early as 1236 that even though she held her arms affectionately out to every convert, yet she embraced Jewish converts "with even greater affection"—basing this attitude on Paul's likening of the Jews to the natural branches of the tree of redemption.

IT REMAINS a puzzle that Franz Rosenzweig, who more than anyone before him appreciated the theological relevance of the realm of liturgy, should have overlooked the special place assigned in it to Israel. On Good Friday the Catholic church prays that all mankind may receive the fruit of redemption. The church prays for the church, the Pope, the bishops, and the holy nation of the church; she prays for the government (of the medieval empire), for the pagans, and for all heretics and schismatics. The church also prays for the Jews—but how? "We pray also for the perfidious* Jews [*pro perfidis Judaeis*], that the Lord our God may lift the veil from their heart so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ our Lord." More significant than the prayer itself (which already applies the ominous theological adjective, "perfidious," to the Jews) is the ritual accompanying—or rather not accompanying—it. In all other prayers the deacon exhorts the community: *Oremus. Flectamus genua* (let us kneel and pray). But when the prayer for the Jews is reached, a gloss remarks: "No Amen. At this point the deacon omits calling the community to their knees lest the memory of the shameful genuflections with which the Jews mocked the Savior at this hour be renewed."

*The meaning of the Latin *perfidus*—"faithless" or "infidel"—is not quite the same as the English "perfidious," which necessarily includes the meaning "treacherous."

Eugen Rosenstock, in his discussion with Franz Rosenzweig, declared that it was no longer a Christian dogma that the Jewish people were "obdurate." But this must be regarded as a personal opinion, since the church continues to pray for an end to Jewish obduracy and for the redemption of the Jews from their darkness *(a suis tenebris)*.

In their exchange of letters both Rosenzweig and Rosenstock presented marginal attitudes rather than the classic positions of church and synagogue; nor did they express theological doctrine. Both were preparing the way to a post-Christian existence for themselves, since the era of the Christian church, Catholic and Protestant, had come to an end for them in Hegel's philosophy and Nietzsche's prophecy.

THE dispute between Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Martin Buber is more central. The Protestant theologian insists that the "only relevant question" is Israel's obdurate rejection of Jesus as the Christ, and he asks whether the destruction of the Temple was not its consequence—a consequence that deprived the Jewish people of a spiritual center. Schmidt, in accordance with the whole Christian tradition, establishes a "theological" relation of crime and punishment between the Crucifixion and the destruction of the Temple. The nearly forty years that elapsed between the Crucifixion (33 C.E.) and the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.) are "symbolically" seen as years of trial, similar to the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness.

Martin Buber, answering from "inside" the Jewish consciousness, states that the Jewish people do not feel themselves to be "rejected" by God. In an enigmatic phrase he admits that for Israel the Christology of Christianity is "surely a relevant event between above and below," but insists that Israel experiences the earthly reality as unredeemed by a Messiah, and cannot admit such a cesura in history as Jesus, as the Christ, represents. Moreover, since no divine revelation can exhaust the divine essence, Israel cannot allow that there should ever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have been an ultimate incarnation of the divine in human flesh.

Buber's description of Jewish experience and doctrine is excellent; but it seems to me that he is vague when it comes to dealing with the concrete question asked by the Protestant theologian: did the Jewry of the Diaspora lose its spiritual center after the destruction of the Temple? The answer to this question is simple but fundamental: not the Temple but the Torah was, and is, the spiritual center of Jewry. The Jewish people did not come to life with the laying of the first stone of the Temple, but with the giving of the Law to Israel in the Covenant of Sinai. It is clear, however, that Martin Buber was not at all prepared to give this answer, since he has always emphasized the Agadic or mythical element of the Jewish tradition, as against the tradition of the Law.

It is perhaps no paradox that Paul, a Pharisee and son of a Pharisee, who claimed to have studied under Gamaliel and to have excelled in his zeal for the Law and tradition—that this same Paul was better prepared than modern Jewish apologists to define the basic issue dividing Judaism and Christianity. That issue is the Law. All the premises of Paul's theology were "Jewish" and even "Pharisaic," but from these he drew heretical conclusions: thus from the possibly legitimate Jewish premise that the Messiah would usher in the end of the Law, he drew the heretical conclusions of Christianity, holding that the Messiah had already come and that the Law was superseded: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). But the basis of the Jewish religion since Ezra has been the Torah, the Law, or better still—Halachah, the "way" of the Law in a man's life. All theological speculations are secondary to this.

THE recent insistence on a rigid monotheism as the defining characteristic of Jewish religious life is contradicted by a fact that contemporary Jewish thinkers tend to overlook: the centuries-long predominance of the Lurianic Cabala in Judaism. The Cabala developed theogonic speculations that can only be compared to the Gnostic (and pagan) mythologies. The mythical union of the divine King and Queen, the Adam-Kadmon speculation, the mythology of the Ten Sefirot, which are not attributes but essentially different manifestations of the divine, challenge every historian of religion who presumes to judge what is Jewish and not Jewish by the criterion of a "rigid monotheism." The Jewish religion could not have withstood the outburst of Cabalistic mythologizing if its fundamental and defining characteristic were a rigid monotheism. As it was, it was able to absorb the Cabala's insights, and draw added power from them.

The Cabalistic mythologies did not shatter the structure of Jewish life; on the contrary, they strengthened it in time of crisis by their enhancing of the prestige of Halachah. Halachah, which is the conduct of life according to the *mitzvot*, they did not understand as a pedagogical system (as in the period of medieval enlightenment), but as a way to achieve sacramental union with the divine. The bulk of the *mitzvot* became a *corpus mysticum* reflecting the divine and cosmic order in the human realm; in this way they attained an importance they had never had before in Jewish history—and in any case, the Jewish vision of God is far too rich and various to be reduced to an abstract monotheism. Challenges not to Judaism's monotheism, but to the validity and interpretation of the Law, shake the Jewish religion and community to their foundations. Any Messianic claim represents such a challenge because it claims to have ushered in an age in which the Law is superseded.

It is hasty to conclude, as so many do, that because Halachah shapes the classical pattern of Jewish life, Judaism is purely "legalistic." Halachah is a structure in which a considerable variety of religious experience is integrated. The language of Halachah is capable of expressing such contraries as rationalist philosophy (Saadia and Maimonides) and mystical mythology (Moses de Leon and Isaac Luria), ecstatic prophetism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Abulafia) and magical ritualism (Jacob Halevi of Marvege). Yet Halachah is not an empty vessel into which any sort of contents can be poured. It has its limit in the divine law, and Messianism in any form must necessarily transgress that limit. It is true that Christian orthodoxy in interpreting itself tries to set up limits against heresies that would discard the Decalogue. But Judaism is bound to insist that Paulinian doctrine still remains destructive of the Law, and therefore at this point, too, Judaism must reject Christianity's interpretation of itself. Paul, when he was Saul, would have been the first to admit this, and indeed he persecuted the early Christian community on the very ground that it was setting aside the Law. Judaism never traveled the road to Damascus; and it cannot, without committing suicide, change Saul's judgment.

CHRISTIAN history, Jesus' claim to the title of Messiah, and Paul's theology of Christ as the end of the Law, are not at all "unique events" for Judaism, but things that have recurred in the Jewish pattern of religious existence. Christian history, as I have said, constitutes no "mystery" for the Jewish religion. Christianity represents a crisis that is "typical" in Jewish history and expresses a typical Jewish "heresy": antinomian Messianism—the belief that with the coming of the Messiah, not observance of the Law, but faith in him is required for salvation.

So far as we can judge, rabbinic tradition has always regarded Jesus' Messianic claim and Paul's theology as heretical antinomianism. Maimonides, in his Code, specifically lists Jesus with other heretics who sought to persuade Israel to abandon the Law. No statement as to the Messianic significance of Jesus for the Gentile nations can be got from any Jewish Halachah.

Gershom Scholem, in his study of Sabbatian Messianism, makes an arresting comparison that enables us to see the beginnings of Christianity in a new light. Sabbatai Zevi's appearance, quickening all the latent hopes of the 17th-century Jewish ghetto, precipitated the most tragic Messianic episode in modern Jewish history. The fact is that the new Messianic community of the Sabbatians, like that of the early Christians, centered around a catastrophic event which, like the death of Jesus, could only be overcome and transcended by the "paradox of faith." For the Sabbatians, this paradox was Sabbatai Zevi's conversion to Islam. His apostasy shook the community of his followers to its foundations, yet became the motor of the Sabbatian "paradox of faith."

The tragic paradox of a dying Messiah in the one case, and of an apostate savior in the other, was interpreted in the light of the prophetic vision of the "suffering servant." "In both cases," writes Scholem, "a certain mystical attitude of belief crystallized round an historical event that drew its strength, in turn, from the very fact of its paradoxicality. Both movements began by adopting an attitude of intense expectation towards the *Parousia*, the advent or return of the savior, be it from Heaven or from the realm of impurity. In both cases the destruction of the old values in the cataclysm of redemption led to an outburst of antinomian tendencies, partly moderate and veiled, partly radical and violent; in both cases you get a new conception of belief as the realization of the new message of salvation . . . in both cases, finally, you get in the end a theology with some kind of Trinity and with God incarnated in the person of the savior." These striking parallels between Sabbatianism and early Christianity cannot be attributed to the influence or imitation of Christian prototypes, since the Sabbatian heresy arose in the Islamic ghetto. Both Sabbatianism and early Christianity were independent expressions of crises into which the Jewish community was plunged when believers in an arrived Messiah were summoned by their theologians to strike off the shackles of the Law, that harsh schoolmaster whom the redemption was to render obsolete.

IF, THEN, the issue between the Christian religion and the Jewish community revolves around the Law, I would hold that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Jewish argument cannot ultimately be given in Midrashic—or rather pseudo-Midrashic—terms. The counterpart to Christian dogma is not a Jewish dogma affirming certain articles of faith concerning the nature of the Divinity and its manifestations. Christian theology is based on Christology, which means that all things, human and divine, achieve relevance only as they relate to Jesus the Christ. Judaism, based on the Law, grants relevance to all things, human and divine, only as they relate to Halachah. It is the weakness of all modern—and not only modern—Jewish theology that it fails to name Halachah, the Law, as its alpha and omega. The Jewish religion has been in a crisis since the time of the Emancipation because it lost its center when Halachah lost its central place and cogency for Jewish thought and conduct.

The moment Halachah ceases to be the determining force in Jewish life, the door is opened to all the disguised anti-Halachic (antinomian) and Christian assumptions current in modern secularized Christian society. Judaism ceases to be a matter of principle and remains only one of tradition. Religious revivals that do not reckon with Halachah as the vital essence of Judaism degenerate into so much romantic nostalgia and only hasten the end of Judaism. A few months ago I attended services at an Orthodox *shul*. The rabbi, product of a modern yeshiva, gave me a cordial greeting and "explained" (during the reading of the Torah!) that "ceremonies" and "rituals" are only "external" and not "so important" as would seem at first sight. He surely did not realize that by translating *mitzvot* by "ceremonies" and "ritual" he had surrendered to the Paulinian criticism of the Law.

Halachah is inevitably eclipsed in an age that can envisage religion only in terms of man's "private" experience, as a (poetic) dialogue between man's lonely soul and the lone God. But such a religion of the heart, even of the "pure" heart, remains disembodied—and who but the elect can lay claim to purity of heart? Halachah is based essentially on the principle of representation: the intention of man's heart and soul has to be presented and represented in his daily life. Consequently, Halachah must become "external" and "juridical," it must deal with the minutiae of life, for only in the detail of life is a presentation of the covenant between God and man possible. Halachah is the "path" of man's life on which he can "walk" before God. Against the ecstasy and delirium of man's soul, Halachah emphasizes the rational and everyday sobriety of justice. Halachah is the law because justice is the ultimate principle. Ecstatic or pseudo-ecstatic religiosity, however, sees only dead legalism and external ceremonialism in the sobriety of justice, just as anarchy can conceive of law and order only as tyranny and oppression.

EMANCIPATION opened the doors of Western civilization to the Jewish community. But that civilization rests on Christian presuppositions and is shaped by Christian symbols. The civil calendar is the same as the Christian calendar; the initials "B.C." and "A.D." express a fundamental Christian article of faith. I am aware that the civil calendar is losing its Christian character, that its Christian initials are being transformed into mere technical signs. But though the Christian meaning of the calendar may be suppressed, it can never become obsolete. The Christian calendar has withstood a number of attempts to replace it with a secular calendar; the French Revolution in the 18th century and the Italian Fascists and the Russian Communists in our own century tried to do so, and failed. We therefore do right to keep in mind the Christian foundation upon which our civil society rests.

This is not all. By the very language we use decisions are made that limit and define our spiritual horizons. The Jewish Holy Scriptures are called the "Old Testament" in English. The term "Old Testament," however, implies the basic Christian claim that the "old" covenant has been superseded by the "new." But it is a Jewish article of faith that the Law never becomes antiquated, that the Covenant of Sinai is as valid today

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as it has always been. Even to call the Torah "law" already implies that pejorative meaning which Paul ascribed to the Mosaic law in his violent critique of it.

The antinomian critique made by a secular society that is nevertheless Christian in its presuppositions is reinforced by the critique of the Law that was made within the Jewish community; the modern Jewish stress on redemption through belief, rather than through a way of life conforming to divinely ordained law, reached its peak in Abraham Geiger's criticism of rabbinic Law. It is an established fact that the last stage of the Sabbatian heresy ushered in the first stage of Jewish Reform. Is it at all surprising that, in these circumstances, the Jewish side in the Jewish-Christian controversy cannot argue today from the center of Jewish faith and experience? The inner crisis of the Jewish religion determines the character of its controversy with the Christian one. If Halachah is no longer valid as the divine and human way of life, if Halachah, in a caricature of "reconstruction," is reduced to a mere bundle of customs and folkways, where shall the Jewish argument get the strength to stand up against the Pauline rejection of the Law?

Modern Jewish thinking is in large part a prisoner of this antinomianism, which pervades modern thought in general; in the world today the principle of law is reduced to a juridical device and the "pathological inclination of love" (Kant) is exalted over against the "blind principle" of justice. The pseudo-Agadic stress in modern Jewish religious thinking on the "romance" of Hasidism, or the romance of a mythologized East European Jewry in general, is in the end no obstacle to the Christianizing of the Jewish people. For what greater "romance" can there be than the incarnation of God in flesh? Only the principle of Halachah offers a check to "romance" between God and man by making the sobriety of justice the foundation of man's life. The controversy between the Jewish and Christian religions points to the perennial conflict between the principle of law and the principle of love. The "yoke of the Law" is challenged by the enthusiasm of love. But the "justice of the Law" may, in the end, be the only challenge to the arbitrariness of love.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OUR CHANGING IDEALS, AS SEEN ON TV

The Father on the Hearth

NORMAN PODHORETZ

AT LEAST fifty plays are produced on television every week. About a third of these are detective and mystery stories; another large slice is devoted to whimsical tales with surprise endings. But the remainder constitutes a genre peculiar to television. It has developed its own style, its own conventions, and to some extent its own subject matter.

These TV plays are theatrical rather than cinematic, taking their cue from Broadway, not Hollywood. Movie stars rarely appear in them, though prominent Broadway figures often do; the casts consist of extremely competent actors most of whom, I imagine, consider themselves theater people. The direction almost always betrays the influence of men like Kazan—which is to say that it tries to combine realism of surface with self-conscious, sometimes arty, arrangements, movement, and overtones. Both dialogue and acting are more sophisticated than is usual in the movies. In general the productions are on a surprisingly high level, considering the number of plays turned out every week.

The tendency is toward low-key drama, a kind of domestic realism whose effect derives from its accuracy in reflecting the ordinary man's conceptions of the world. The very style of the acting—always plausible, always controlled, never permitting itself the least intimation of hamminess, rarely even admitting that it is artifice rather than actual conversation—restricts the drama to that level of reality which is easily accessible to common sense. A whole play may be based on a very trivial incident, chosen because everyone in the audience will have experienced something similar. For example, a teen-age boy takes the family car without his father's permission, gets involved in a minor accident, and doesn't come home until three in the morning. His parents wait up for him, anxiety-ridden, and when he finally returns, all is forgiven and the whole family goes to bed with the sense of having got through another crisis. This play is "true to life" in a way that popular culture seldom is: the audience has never had the stuff of its daily existence taken so seriously, and it responds with a new feeling of self-importance and dignity. Unlike the soap operas, which betray a masochistic relish in minor troubles, the point here is the relief people feel in being able to resume their usual routine: trouble teaches gratitude for the humdrum.

Depending for its effectiveness on its ability to remain content with the world perceived and comprehended by common sense, this kind of drama must resist appealing either to escapist fantasy or to the critical intelligence, never wandering above or below the staples of experience. Nowadays, to be sure, that can include a great deal of surprising matter. In a play about the relation between a mother and her son, suggestions of an Oedipus complex are offered in much the same way as characters appear wearing clothes: the writer, the director, the actors, take it completely for granted as an ordinary element in the family. It isn't a

---

A PERCEPTIVE young American critic, just returned to his native Brooklyn after three years at Cambridge University, looked for some hours at the family TV set with an eye freshened by absence—and discovered something: a new kind of "domestic drama" which seems to him to reflect some of the new values of American society today. NORMAN PODHORETZ is a graduate of Columbia University and of the College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He was born in 1930.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mysterious, sinister force (as it tends to be in the movies) but a tangible factor existing almost wholly on the surface and demanding to be observed. This means, of course, that it needn't have consequences; in this particular instance, it counted for nothing in the plot. That a son should be in love with his mother is an index of his normality, not of his monstrousness. This must imply, I suppose, that the audience has been trained to regard it thus, or is well on its way to doing so.

LIFE in these plays, then, is non-heroic: a world governed by common sense is a world where "everyone has his faults and his good points." No insuperable moral problems are recognized, for, in a universe ruled exclusively by forces visible to the common-sense eye, there can be no dilemma which resists the touch of good will and a spirit of compromise. Often a play will open with a situation in which right seems to conflict with right, but in the end someone is proved wrong or neurotic or misguided, and the difficulty immediately resolves *itself*. A common-sense ethos must always hack its way through to the simple truths which are supposed to lie buried beneath the ugly and delusory overgrowths of experience.

Though everyone in these plays has weaknesses as well as virtues, we find the weaknesses far less in evidence. If a man sins, he does so almost accidentally, for sin is something that happens to people, not something they do. They make errors of judgment all the time, but they generally know nothing of pure or gratuitous malice. Only their virtues are essential to them; their sins are somehow external, reefs against which they have blundered in the fog. (The TV crime plays, on the other hand, become a repository of much that is omitted from domestic drama: crime is a violation of common-sense living, and therefore results in the criminal's exclusion from the sphere in which all slips can be made good.)

One would expect that a world made by common sense, ruled by common sense, and upheld by common sense, would be a pleasant world to live in. In many ways it is. It produces people whose passions are under control, who are well-bred, well-mannered, open, friendly, helpful, and above all, reasonable. More than anything else, they want to get along, they will do nearly anything to keep the peace.

And yet the optimism we find here is gray rather than flaming; it is overcast with a sadness that seems a new element in American popular culture. There is a distinct feeling that life is tough even for those who aren't harassed by the landlord and the grocer; and there is a shade of disillusion over the discovery that human possibility is not infinite—reverberations of Korea are in the air. The mood is more sober than what used to be called American optimism, and, as we shall see, far more honest.

BEFORE the dislocations caused by 3D, Hollywood had been gravitating in several full-dress productions toward a similar form of drama (see Robert Warshow's "The Movie Camera and the American" in COMMENTARY, March 1952). But the features characterizing the new genre—an insistent interest in domestic life, a *dramatis personae* entirely composed of ordinary people, a strict fidelity to the appearance of things, a quiet tone (everything is underplayed), a paucity of plot, and much discussion and debate—made it apparent that its real home was in television. Going to the movies is still more or less an occasion for most people, and an occasion demands something extraordinary. Even the size of the cinema screen insures that the movie world shall be larger than life (indeed, in answer to the small television screen, movie screens have become larger); perhaps for this reason, movies reproduced on television lose their bite. Watching television, on the other hand, has become an integral part of domestic routine, and the new genre serves an impulse to make the program a relevant and appropriate presence in the living room.

The living room, in fact, is the favorite setting of these plays, just as the favorite cast is a family. It is a middle-class family,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neither unusually happy nor (as in the soap operas) continually besieged with trouble. Its most remarkable quality as a group is a negative one—fear is absent from the relations of its members and power thus becomes a corollary of love: it can only be had by free consent. The father guides and administers his household; he does not rule it. The plot always turns on some crisis that has suddenly developed, often in the family relations themselves: as in any family, its members are continually in the process of losing their illusions about one another, and the effort at readjustment is constant. Ultimately they emerge from their difficulties as more of a family, having restored a workable balance of power.

ALMOST always the father comes through as a sharper figure than the mother, who is supposed to have her being in and through her husband and children. A good woman is not so much *by* as *on* the side of her husband. If she asserts her personality too forcefully, we may be sure that calamity will result. Evil, when it makes one of its rare visits to these plays, is likely to come in the shape of a domineering wife or an overly possessive mother. As for the father, he is an earnest man, but his earnestness is mellow compared with the fierce unyielding grimness of his children or his wife's firm, uncritical loyalty to her feelings. Soft-spoken, controlled, never glamorous-looking, but always carrying himself with great dignity and self-assurance, he exhibits the palpable scars of a long combat with life. His humility, patience, and sadness are the products of many frustrations, and he is thus extremely skeptical of any comprehensive schemes or over-ambitious plans. Sometimes he is portrayed as a great disappointment to his children—for we live in an era where parents rather than children are perennially on trial—and in such cases the guilt and bitterness he feels are tempered by his pity for the son who will soon learn that all human beings are disappointing to those who make excessive demands on them.

We practically never see this new American father (as we used to in the movies and as we still do in television soap operas) involved in the big business deal, or embroiled in the problems of earning money: a comfortable income is taken for granted, while his career is merely a shadowy presence in the background. The great reality of his life, the sphere in which things happen to him, is his family. He carries his responsibilities willingly, without a sense of oppression, and the fact that they occupy him so fully, challenging all his resources of character and mind, never allowing him to get bored, is his most powerful proof to his son that the ordinary life is worth living. For this is the great lesson he is intent upon teaching. We find him telling his daughter that marriage, children, and love are far more important than fame and wealth; we find him insisting to his son that there is no disgrace in compromise. He represents reasonableness, tolerance, and good will: the image of American maturity.

PRESERVING the family from disruption is the role he is most often called upon to play. One species of disruption is conflict with his children. The conflict never takes the form of youth's rebellion against parental authority because the father's authority over his children is not given in the nature of things. Since he is a constitutional leader rather than an absolute monarch, his authority must constantly be reaffirmed at the polls. Nor can he assert it forcefully or arbitrarily: he must win the right to participate in his son's problems by making himself sufficiently attractive in the boy's eyes—good "public relations" is essential to his position. Interference with his son's private affairs being a matter of the greatest delicacy, he only presumes to speak in crucial matters. Otherwise he is there, looking on, setting an example, communicating through the silent power of his personality.

In an encounter with his children, he confronts them with a flexibility that often seems to be weakness but in reality turns out to be a wisdom based on the knowledge that human beings cannot afford to be too

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hard either on themselves or others. One play (already mentioned above) was about a young man of twenty who discovers his mother committing adultery while his father is away on a business trip. After wandering around the streets all night, the son staggers into his house, dishevelled, distraught, and looking a little drunk; to his amazement, he finds his father waiting for him. "Now listen, son, I know everything; your mother wired me and I took the next plane back. She told me the whole story."* The boy covers his face with his hands, unable to speak. "What are you going to do?" asks his father. "What do you mean, what am *I* going to do? What are *you* going to do?" "Well, what do you expect me to do—leave your mother and break up our home because she made a mistake?" At this suggestion that his father wants to forget the whole thing, the boy stares at him incredulously; it's impossible to go on living with an immoral mother and a weak-kneed father. Patiently and sympathetically, the father persists in trying to convince his son that their family is too important to be destroyed by a mistake. His wife, he explains, is going through a difficult phase; her son is grown up, she has nothing left to do, she thinks she isn't needed. Now she's upstairs suffering more than her son would believe, terrified that he may turn away from her. "Our job is to help her, not to kill her. I've got to be more loving, you've got to show that you understand her side of things. Will you do it?" And, of course, the play ends with the boy going upstairs to comfort his mother. This is an atmosphere in which adultery and betrayal breed not hatred, but new responsibility. Yet all this understanding disturbs one: is there no breaking point?

Occasionally there is, as when the father's worldliness becomes irrelevant (or worse) to his son's problems. A young man, caught violating the Honor System in his pre-graduation exams at college, is about to be expelled by a committee of his peers, when he offers to turn in the names of the others who had cheated with him. The list of names is confided to the chairman of the committee, a brilliant student who is planning to marry a sweet young classmate and go into his father's business. On the list he finds his fiancée's name. Should he, before handing it in to the Dean, strike off her name? His father, guessing the boy's trouble, persuades him to do so: "You're going out into a tough world where nobody will care about you and your interests. You have to look out for yourself and the people you love. This is a small town, son; they never forget a scandal, they'll never let you forget that your wife was once expelled from college for cheating. Everybody cheats; the only difference between a respectable man and a cheater is that the cheater has been caught. Son, don't let your 'principles' destroy your happiness. Use your head, boy!" At first the boy takes this advice, but later, to the consternation of his father, confesses while delivering his valedictory address, and proclaims his own expulsion. The two young people leave the small university town together to begin a new life.

Though repudiated, the father in this play is not unsympathetically portrayed. He realizes that the Honor System places too great a burden on young people, and that there is something absurd—something that violates common sense—in allowing a trivial matter to ruin a life. He does not, as his own father might have done, advise his son to give up this girl who will disgrace him: the highest value is still preservation of the family, even if it hasn't quite been formed yet. And in this play the idea of family takes on a special significance. The world outside is assumed to be hostile (like the outraged student body demanding the expulsion of the cheaters), or, like the kindly Dean, helpless in the face of circumstances and the Rules. The world outside is mechanical, rigid, governed by cold standards of no one's making: even the Dean can't protect the students he would like to forgive. Within the family, however, a man has resources, for the family rests on love and reasonable-

*I quote from memory throughout this article.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness, and it is in the nature of love to persist despite circumstance, while reasonableness provides flexibility to liberate the spirit from the tyranny of Rules. A person is most a person to those who love him; otherwise he is judged and disposed of.

THAT understanding and flexibility should be the father's greatest qualities is not surprising. What does surprise us, however, is that he rarely feels ambition for his children, merely wishing them to lead normal, contented lives. The only ambitious father I remember seeing is the one in the play just discussed, and he is also the only father who comes off badly in the end—as if ambitiousness were an act of *hubris* to be avenged. The drive for extraordinary achievement has always been considered notoriously American. An identity is something that must be earned, not inherited, and once earned it remains precarious and must be vigilantly maintained: if you lose your money, you also lose your name. This compulsion to prove that we are "saved" is probably a consequence of being born into a Puritan culture—many marks of status in America are simply secularized versions of what once were the symptoms of grace.

We seem, however, under the influence of psychoanalysis, to have reached a point where the most important mark of status has become not money, power, or fame, but a reasonably happy family life. Play after play insists that everyone is saved, that all are granted grace if they are but willing to accept it: adjustment is supposed to be available to all.

The way to justify the space you take up in the world is—as one father puts it—not to be *somebody*, but just to *be*. An adaptation of Dos Passos' *The Big Money* is used as a vehicle for showing the disastrous consequences of the pursuit of wealth; a young boxer who had been a foundling realizes that he needn't be compulsive about becoming a champion in order to give his infant son a "name"; a great soprano feigns the loss of her voice because she has learned that happiness lies in raising children and being supported by a responsible husband; a distinguished (divorced) actress gives up her career because she falls in love with a man who teaches her that what she really wants is a husband and family; a potentially great pianist is forced to admit that he is incapable of performing on the concert stage, and finds that being released from an immature ambition allows him for the first time to feel content in his marriage.

A PARTICULARLY interesting example is a play about a widower, father of a fifteen-year-old daughter, who falls in love with a formerly great concert pianist. We are given to understand that some sort of illness interrupted her career, but now she is working steadily to stage a comeback. The woman is in her thirties, completely dedicated to music, living in a room which is stuffed with busts of great composers and that suggests the atmosphere of a mausoleum. Pressured into a date with the widower by a friendly neighbor, she reveals herself as socially inept. Her behavior is awkward, she can't dance, and she commits the great crime of being a killjoy by leaving the country club at midnight. ("I'm so sorry to have ruined your evening," she apologizes pathetically. "I knew I shouldn't have come. I'm just no good at this sort of thing. And now I have to get some sleep, because I have a long day of practice ahead of me.") The widower was an extremely good representative of his type: equable, quiet, observant (the camera kept finding excuses for giving us close-ups of his intently serious eyes), sensible, understanding, and completely at his ease in the many different situations the play showed him in. We soon discover that the widower's young daughter fancies herself a pianist too. Against the tactful urging of her father, she breaks a date for the junior prom in order to prepare for a high-school concert. Eventually, of course, the daughter and the ex-concert pianist become great friends. Father is disturbed, but for the moment does nothing, allowing her to study with the older woman. As soon as the high-school concert is over, he intends to be firm.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The night before the concert, however, he is horrified to learn that great plans are being made for his daughter. "She reminds me so much of what I was like at her age. And she has talent. You can't stand in her way. I've sent for the Great Maestro to hear her tomorrow night. He'll convince you." After the concert, the Great Maestro tells his ex-pupil that her protegé is extremely talented, but that she'll never be anything more than a competent performer: the divine spark is missing. Father is pleased, but the woman refuses to accept this judgment as final. "There are other teachers. We'll get them to hear her. I *know* she has talent. She'll work hard, oh it will be very hard, but she'll make it, I know she will." The father shakes his head sadly. "Why did you stop giving concerts?" "Because I was ill." "No, you weren't ill. I know because I looked up the reviews. They said you had lost your genius, that you were a great child prodigy who never developed." "No, no, it's not true!" "But it *is* true, my darling. Why can't you face reality? Why won't you move out of this tomb and live?" Through her tears she whimpers, "But don't you understand? I have to be somebody." Then comes the clinching line of the play: "Why do you have to be *somebody?* Why can't you just *be?*" And she collapses into his arms. In the last act, the young girl tells her idol that she has to be somebody, but the redeemed artist repeats father's epigram, adding that "there are so many things in life for you. There's your first dance, and the first time you fall in love, and marriage and children." The child weeps hysterically and rushes out of the room, but father and stepmother-to-be embrace. "Don't worry. She'll be all right now."

THE play hardly entertains the suggestion that there are circumstances in which a normal life is worth sacrificing, nor does the writer admit that there may be more than one way of finding happiness, or that there may be other forms of the good life which take place outside the family circle. All this is typical of serious television drama. It would be a mistake, however, to think that "conformity" is being urged, if we mean by that imposing a specific model of behavior. On the assumption that everyone really wants the same kind of things out of life, these plays argue, quite plausibly, that only childishness or neurosis (both of which are characterized by the excessive demands they foster) will prevent people from taking advantage of their inalienable right to pursue happiness. Nor is there any uncertainty about the content of happiness; the only problem is finding the surest, swiftest, and safest means to a predetermined end.

Yet, curiously enough, the most salient feature of this ethos remains its sadness. It presents itself as making a modest demand upon life, a demand so modest that life would be guilty of the cruelest perversity to deny it. Bearing in its countenance the lines and wrinkles of maturity, it is always opposed to the presumptuous, enthusiastic "idealism" of youth. Yet what could be more optimistic than the belief that contentment and security are within everyone's reach? When success is measured by money or fame, failure can be chalked up to bad luck; the whole man is rarely in the balance, for a certain distinction will be maintained between the private and public selves: the private self is there to fall back upon if the other turns out treacherous. But when success is conceived as an attribute of the personality rather than of the wallet, failure becomes the tenth circle of Hell. A new fortune can be made, but a man's personality is his essence—personality, in fact, is the modern word for soul—and if that proves befouled, then no good can come of it. In these plays personality itself figures as the goal of all striving; the object of ambition becomes not success but "successful living." The type of all failures is the neurotic, pictured writhing under his burdens like one of the damned; and appropriately so, for in this view of things, a failure of the personality is the last and most refined torture of the Devil. Perhaps some perception of this accounts for the resignation that overcomes the intrinsic cheeriness of the new ethos.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT WOULD be foolish at this point to make any simple judgments of television drama as a whole. Its most notable achievements, I think, are the sharpness with which it has distinguished itself from the movies, the effort it has made to be honest, the success with which it has managed to be serious without being objectionably pretentious. Most important, perhaps, it gives pleasure as so many "serious" movies have failed to do—Hollywood's great fault is its inability to see any connection between "entertainment" and "significance." Apart from a few comic strips, television drama seems the only area of American popular culture that refuses to distinguish finally between the two. Because it isn't imitative, it gives a picture of American life whose accuracy may be difficult to measure but whose honesty is sometimes astonishing: there was a time when the play about the mother's adultery would have ended with the discovery that she hadn't really committed adultery at all.

It may be that this drama reflects the values and aspirations of the newly emerged middle class, now large enough to constitute a mass audience and powerful enough to set the stamp of its attitudes on an important segment of popular culture. Formed by psychoanalysis and nourished by the concepts of social work, this class shows a conspicuous distaste for violence and a remarkable lack of interest in the ungovernable passions of young love. It puts a very high value on the family, though not in order to retreat from the community. The family here is an expanding rather than a restrictive entity, the nucleus of community; it comes to mean all decent, sensible, and understanding people, "people like us," people, that is, who act *as* people and not as "forces." The retreat to the home, then, means a retreat from "environment"—from the competitive world of business and politics, which menaces amiable human relations and does not yield easily to compromise and good will.

Finally, this drama has contributed a new figure to the popular imagination. Attractive and disturbing as he is, the father may turn out to be a summation of the postwar ethos. In his benign firmness, in his mature sobriety, in his sad but determined sense of responsibility, in his unceasing efforts to keep the peace, we can detect the traces of the contemporary political climate. He reflects the feeling that the only safe oasis in a dangerous, cold-war world is our own home, a home which, though it may once have been taken lightly, must now be preserved at all costs if the battle is not to be lost everywhere. And in the long series of plays which turn on a rediscovery of the father by his son, we find, perhaps, the mark of a generation which has moved out of rebellion and skepticism into a patient and humble acquiescence; and we may here discover the role the new middle class seems to have marked out for its own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CRISIS BEHIND RUSSIA'S SLOWDOWN

Negotiation Now: Its Uses and Limits

RICHARD LOWENTHAL

WESTERN observers often fail to notice new trends in Soviet affairs because they crop up in unexpected places. Since Stalin's death, attention has been focused on Russian foreign policy or on the struggle for succession to his power. But so far the changes in Russian foreign policy have been rather limited, and the struggle for the succession has not yet been conclusively decided. All we have been able to do with respect to these two topics is speculate, foisting very divergent interpretations on the relatively few events known to us. Meanwhile, too little attention has been paid to an area of Soviet life in which a crisis has emerged whose causes have nothing to do with Stalin's demise or the struggle for power inside the Kremlin. Yet this crisis is bound to have a crucial influence on that struggle, and on Soviet foreign policy as well.

I mean the breakdown of the Soviet arms program, and of the Soviet economic program in general, due to a triple crisis in agriculture, raw materials, and manpower. This triple crisis has been brought about by the very nature of the Communist arms program—by its scale and by its tempo.

WESTERN views on the present character of Soviet reality divide by and large into two schools: the "optimists" and the "pessimists." The optimists, particularly well represented in Great Britain, see the Bolshevik regime evolving in this post-Stalinist era toward "bureaucratic conservatism." A new class society, they say, developed under Stalin, with the Soviet administrators and managers and the Red Army officers forming its upper, privileged stratum; this new stratum's natural inclination in recent years to enjoy its advantages was "artificially" thwarted by Stalin's personal dictatorship and his stubborn adherence to a distorted conception of the original revolutionary dogma; with his death, things have changed: the Kremlin's present more conciliatory foreign policy and the economic concessions promised the Soviet consumer are answers to the pressure—now irresistible—of the new upper stratum; a new, conservative Communism is emerging that no longer offers a revolutionary threat to the rest of the world, and Russia may now be depended upon, just like any other state, to keep international agreements arrived at through negotiation—and the Cold War is over because the world is no longer divided into two irreconcilable ideological camps.

Against this, the pessimists, who are far more likely to be American, hold that there has been no fundamental change in the Soviet regime. They see the recent shifts in Russian policy as mere tactical maneuvers in the course of a struggle for power between individuals; the Soviet Union, now as before, is ruled by a party dictatorship, not a conservative bureaucracy, and the only way

---

WHO needs a "relaxation of international tension" more—Russia or the West? RICHARD LOWENTHAL writes to say that it is Russia. This despite the coyness, to say the least, with which the Kremlin has received the West's latest offers to negotiate such a relaxation. The reason, Mr. Lowenthal suggests here, is not the internal political struggle that arose with Stalin's death, but the breakdown, during this past year, of the economic program imposed on Russia—and the entire Soviet world—with the result that the Kremlin finds itself overmatched in the arms race into which it plunged the world when its auxiliaries invaded South Korea in 1950. Mr. Lowenthal, who has in the last three or four years risen to eminence as a commentator as well as reporter on European affairs, was born in Germany in 1908 and studied at the universities of Berlin and Heidelberg, at which latter he took his doctorate in economics and sociology. Under Hitler he was active in the Socialist underground before emigrating to England, where he became a journalist. He was a Reuters correspondent for seven years, and since 1951 has covered Germany, and Central and Eastern Europe in general, for the London *Observer*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this dictatorship can legitimize itself, now as before, is by using its state power to the end of permanent revolution at home and abroad. The pessimists also say that Stalin's successors, like himself, must keep alive the myth that foreign imperialism constitutes a permanent threat to the Soviet Union, otherwise they cannot justify or hold on to their power; hence the Bolshevik regime cannot become conservative without committing suicide: while that regime endures the world will remain divided into two irreconcilable ideological camps, and the Cold War go on.

Both views contain important elements of truth. But both are also too narrow. It is true that the party regime has been shaken and its ideology thrown in flux by Stalin's death. It may regain its rigidity under a new dictator, or it may dissolve under the pressure of the social forces unleashed by the internal struggle for power. The outcome is still uncertain—and it will depend upon that outcome whether the present division of the world into two ideological camps will continue. But what has become certain—and, as I have said, this has nothing to do with Stalin's departure—is the failure of the Soviet armaments program as pursued in recent years. And this failure must have its effect on Soviet foreign policy.

Never during their thirty-six years of power have the Bolshevik leaders ceased to regard themselves as bearers of a world revolutionary mission. But their conception of the means by which Communism was to expand, and of the pace of that expansion, has repeatedly changed.

Right after 1917 the spread of the revolution to a number of key industrial countries was held to be the immediate goal, and the precondition for building true socialism in Russia itself. But Lenin's New Economic Policy of 1921 implied the forced postponement of that goal. Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," conceived in 1925 and put in effect with the first Five Year Plan and the forced collectivization campaign that began in 1928, justified the decision to proceed with the socialist reconstruction of Russia without waiting upon international developments. This turn was accompanied by a growing disregard for the Communist parties outside Russia, but the belief was never abandoned that a world-wide expansion of the Soviet system was the only guarantee of its ultimate security, and that the antagonism between the capitalist world and that system was unresolvable.

At no time—not under Lenin, Stalin, or since—has Soviet foreign policy been exclusively determined by the factors which shape the foreign policies of other states. Yet Soviet Russia during most of its history—at least from 1921 to 1945—tried seriously to develop so-called normal relations with as many other countries as possible. Though retaining the doctrine of world revolution and manipulating the Communist parties abroad, the Soviet government recognized the governments of the capitalist world and asked for their recognition in return, traded with them and asked them for credits, and signed non-aggression pacts and alliances.

The Cold War may be defined as the period in which the Soviet regime has done just the opposite—as in those eight years and more (since the war) in which the Kremlin has made any real cooperation with non-Communist states impossible. In this period Soviet diplomatic activity became almost entirely a matter of ideological propaganda and military pressure.

The first phase of the Cold War, in which the Kremlin tried to exploit the upheavals following upon the Nazi collapse in order to secure Communist control over the largest possible part of Europe, reached its climax in 1948 with the Prague coup, and then found its limit, and end, in the Berlin airlift, the break with Tito, Zhdanov's death, the liquidation of the Greek civil war, and the fall of Vosnesensky at home.

Then came an interval of hesitation and indecision in Europe, while Mao Tse-tung was winning his victory in China. The second definite phase of the Cold War opened in 1950 with the attack on South Korea. But this won no new territory for Communism, and served only to scare the West into a vast rearmament drive.

In the effort to answer that drive, the Soviet Union launched one of its own in which it constantly and stubbornly raised its production targets, both in Russia and the satellites. This effort has broken down completely and conclusively during the last few months—not because of Stalin's death, but because of inexorable economic factors—and now it has been largely abandoned, not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in words but in verifiable deeds. Nor can it now be resumed, no matter what turn the struggle for Stalin's succession takes.

THE progress of the breakdown can be most clearly observed in the satellite countries. From 1950 through 1952, the targets laid down for heavy industry in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Eastern Germany were again and again revised upward under Russian pressure; in the end, annual increases of from 15 to 18 per cent were demanded even of Czechoslovakia, where rural labor reserves were practically exhausted. Yet the more moderate targets set for increases in consumer's goods and agriculture were not lowered. An all-over rise in individual productivity, the accelerated absorption of what was left of the middle classes into the industrial working force, the speedier collectivization of agriculture, and the increased employment of female labor were expected to achieve these goals. The rising investment rate was to be financed by increased "economy" in production, which meant in practice higher output norms for workers and higher delivery quotas for peasants. This meant in turn that both in the factory and on the farm more work was to be done for the same amount of real income.

DURING the summer and autumn of 1953, one satellite regime after another had to admit that the fulfillment of these plans was proving impossible and that the targets of production had to be scaled down. The East German regime—the one most openly and directly dependent on the Kremlin—already faced a crisis in February 1953, at the time of the mass flight to the West, and was the first openly to confess, at the beginning of June, that it had tried to "build socialism" too fast and without due regard to the fact that the existence of the Soviet Union made it unnecessary for her "allies" to develop all branches of their own heavy industry. The excessive tempo of industrialization had during the past year led to a drop in the consumer-goods industries and a crisis in agriculture; there had been a flight from the land, and therefore a fall in the people's standard of living. A new policy was now to be inaugurated, which would put that first. Concessions would be made to the farmers and the urban middle classes: the acute shortages in food, textiles, and shoes were to be alleviated by drawing on the state's reserve stocks and by emergency imports; and plans were to be revised to reduce the emphasis on heavy industry in favor of consumer goods, housing, and agriculture.

The same kind of news came from Hungary after the reconstruction of her government at the beginning of July. The pace here had likewise been excessive; a decline in standards of living and a mass flight from the land were admitted; concessions to the peasants and a revision of plans were announced. Before the end of August the head of the Rumanian government confessed to the same mistakes, admitting that Rumanian agriculture was still below its pre-war level, and announcing similar remedies. Towards the middle of September, the prime minister of Czechoslovakia stated that his government's latest goals for the expansion of heavy industry had been too ambitious, and therefore had not been fulfilled; it was now necessary to cut down the number of projects under construction in order to concentrate on those that could most quickly increase the country's supply of raw materials. Here, too, agriculture was admitted to be still below its pre-war level.

At the time of writing, Poland is the only satellite that has not confessed failure or announced a general scaling down of production quotas. Meanwhile there are indications that not only may investment in heavy industry be slowed down in Eastern Germany and western Czechoslovakia, but that the artificially fostered heavy industries of backward Slovakia, Hungary, and Rumania may actually be reduced. The halting of work on the Danube-Black Sea canal and the abandonment of the projected Oder-Danube canal would indicate that the Russians no longer think of developing these regions at any cost. And it is now also known that the much publicized HUKO project for a heavy industrial combine near Kosice, which was to form the basis for the modernization of Slovakia, was abandoned this spring, while reports from Hungary say that half her blast furnaces are no longer operating, construction has been stopped on two power stations and several industrial combines, and that tens of thousands of indus-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trial workers were dismissed during September.

WHAT about the Soviet Union itself? The present Five Year Plan, though in effect since the beginning of 1951, was announced only at the 19th Communist Party Congress in October 1952. We do not know what changes preceded its announcement, or whether the climax of the frantic armament drive had already been passed at that time. Malenkov claimed in his speech to the Supreme Soviet on August 8 of this year that the goals for heavy industry were being fulfilled, but demanded greater concentration on agriculture and the consumer-goods industries in order to raise standards of living. Khrushchev, in his report to the Central Committee a month later, announced a large number of concessions to the collective farmers and a big drive to transfer both experts and skilled workers to agriculture in order to obtain a "steep increase" in that sector between now and 1955. The significant point is that the targets Khrushchev hopes to achieve by 1955 through these extraordinary measures are no higher than the original ones set for the present Five Year Plan.

Obviously, the new measures have been decided upon not freely, or out of a benevolent desire to raise standards of living as such, but to cope with a severe agricultural crisis that threatens the stability of the entire Soviet system. And it is equally obvious that this crisis is owed to the same policy of forced industrialization that has caused the crisis in the satellites. It is obvious, again, that the concessions to the collective farmers can be financed, and skilled labor shifted from industry to the countryside, only if other targets of production are reduced. Malenkov's anouncement that the production of capital goods (or means of production) had reached 70 per cent of the total industrial output of the USSR, and that a more balanced relation with consumer production was now to be sought, shows that the retreat from forced industrialization in the satellites is part of a new over-all policy decided upon for the USSR too. The reported cessation of canal-building in Central Asia would bear this out.

Even in China, where forced industrialization in Soviet style is just about to begin, and the creation of a heavy industry plant has been constantly proclaimed as the chief objective of China's first Five Year Plan—even there, the announcement of the details of that plan has been delayed while "overambitious" projects were being cut down on Soviet advice.

The Soviet propagandists contend that this great shift in economic policy all over the Communist world is an act of sheer benevolence made possible by the achievements of industrialization to date, and perhaps by an increased sense of international security. In the West, the optimists see the new policy as an expression of the new spirit in the Kremlin, while the pessimists wonder whether it is not the possession of the hydrogen bomb that has made it possible for the Soviets to ease up on general armaments. It is our thesis, however, that the new policy has been forced upon the Soviet regime by the insurmountable economic, and indeed physical, obstacles that its previous policy has come up against.

MODERN industry can be expanded almost as fast as one chooses if sufficient capital is at hand for investment. For this reason, totalitarian governments, presumably free to invest according to their political needs, tend to think that they are likewise free to expand industry at any pace they wish. However, their investment capital is not so unlimited as they imagine, being determined by three external factors: manpower, agriculture, and raw materials. The production of none of these can be increased by fiat, and thus they set necessary limits to industrial investment and the pace of industrial expansion. If that pace is stepped up without regard to the maximum rate at which any one, or all, of these three factors can be increased, "nature" applies the brake. This holds as true in a capitalist boom as under a Communist plan. In the first case, the brake is felt as a gradual increase in costs; in the second, it is a question of physical, natural impossibility.

It was such impossibility that applied the brake in the Soviet empire in 1952 and 1953. There was, first, not enough manpower available to fulfill all the plans at one and the same time. Even in the more backward satellite countries, with their traditional surplus of rural labor power, the human reserves

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were nearing exhaustion. In the more advanced countries, on the other hand, the scheduled increase in heavy industry was to be achieved almost entirely by the sheer increase of productivity. Yet an increase in productivity of, say, 15 per cent in a single year in a developed country working at full capacity is a physical impossibility—even by use of the harshest imaginable slave-driving methods.

There was therefore only one way left to meet the priority quotas for the expansion of heavy industry, and that was to withdraw manpower from agricultural production, at no matter what cost, while at the same time withholding it from light industry. As we now know from official admissions, this was the way chosen by desperate administrators in all the satellite countries—and, evidently, in the Soviet Union too.

The exodus from the countryside to town was speeded up by a redoubled collectivization drive. But the agricultural machinery, the fertilizers, and the feed that were to make the reduced working forces of the new collective farms even more productive were not there: the machinery factories, the chemical plants, and the foreign-exchange reserves had already been earmarked for heavy industry. The result was a continent-wide decline in agricultural production; and, as happens so easily without agricultural reserve stocks, one bad harvest was enough to create a continent-wide food crisis.

A third obstacle was the difficulty of increasing the output of coal and iron with the given mining resources. Poland and Czechoslovakia supply between them almost all the coal for satellite Eastern Europe. Poland's coal surplus is, however, her only source of free foreign exchange with which to buy Western goods, including Swedish iron ore for herself and the other satellites. Yet Poland's coal production plan could barely be fulfilled by using up to 20 per cent of forced labor in her mines; while Czechoslovakia's coal quota, though around 15 per cent of her miners were already forced laborers, could not be met owing to absenteeism, until the army's "Technical Aid Battalions" (the conscripted but unarmed sons of the middle class, and other "unreliable" elements) were sent down into the pits last August. Of all this coal so desperately mined, Russia herself has taken an ever increasing share—20 million tons this year from Poland as against 14 millions last year—leaving less and less for export to the West. Yet at the same time Russia has been unwilling or unable to make good the iron ore which the satellites can no longer import from Sweden, by increasing deliveries to them from her own mines at Krivoi Rog.

The effects of the various shortages have been exacerbated by their interaction. An ill-fed miner will produce less coal after a while, no matter how much he is threatened or bribed by the state; a farmer who gets no consumer goods for his money will produce, or deliver, less and less, and if pestered with impossible demands will finally quit; a factory worker shivering in the cold room that is his home, harassed by electricity cuts, and eating poor food, will turn out a poorer and poorer product. The point was reached in the Communist world where the further use of force decreased rather than increased the economic yield.

All these difficulties must have been long known to the Soviet leaders, just as they have been long known to Western economists studying the Soviet situation. Nevertheless, these leaders for years refused to admit that their armament goals could not be achieved, and therefore refused to revise them. Meanwhile the Western economists were equally reluctant to predict outright failure. Both parties seem to have been hypnotized by the notion that nothing was economically impossible for a full-blown totalitarian state; both shared the belief that such a thing as economic limits to state power was an illusion of the bygone age of liberal capitalism—a present reality only for states old-fashioned enough to count the cost of a policy in terms of human lives.

This faith in the transcendent power of the totalitarian state dates, both in the East and the West, from the time of the first Five Year Plan and the forced collectivization of Russian agriculture. It was then that Stalin achieved his "revolution from above" by starving and deporting millions of people; nor did he blink then at the catastrophic decline of Soviet livestock.

Now, however, we can see how this precedent was misleading. At the time of the first Five Year Plan, 1928-1933, Stalin was anxious above all to transform the struc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ture of Soviet agriculture in order to get the peasant in the grip of his planning machine: his chief aim was such a shift in social power as could be achieved only if the state was willing to sacrifice millions of human beings and at the same time assimilate the partial ruin of the country's economy. After 1950, however, the chief, the obsessive aim of the Bolshevik leaders was to increase the Soviet economy's war potential as quickly as possible. Even in the satellites, collectivization was decided upon as a means in the first place of achieving production rather than social or political goals. Given *this* difference, economic limits *did* exist—this, quite apart from whatever effect a policy of slavery, speed-ups, and planned starvation might have on the readiness of the satellite peoples to defend "their" popular democracies.

For years the Soviet leaders were repeatedly warned against taxing the satellite economies to their breaking point. The "nationalist" heresy of the former Polish Communist leader Gomulka consisted not only in his initial reluctance to damn Tito as a traitor, but above all in his doubts about the advisability of forced collectivization in Poland—and thus, even after his fall, the Polish regime has generally shown great skill in keeping the pace of industrialization moderate. In Czechoslovakia, the late Gottwald's planning experts desperately opposed a policy that meant the ruin of their country's traditional manufacturing industries and the surrender of the latter's export markets in the West; one such expert, Ludwig Frejka, paid for this opposition with his life, being executed as an alleged accomplice of the "traitor" Slansky. In Hungary, cautious and diplomatic reservations were voiced by party boss and ex-Prime Minister Rakosi, and by his former chief planner, Zoltan Vas. In Rumania, it appears, Ana Pauker warned against over-hasty collectivization at the beginning of 1952. Though almost all these "right-wingers" were demoted (with the partial exception of Rakosi) none, except Frejka, was put on trial or executed: Gomulka has recently been released from prison and is convalescing in a hospital, while Frejka's former immediate colleague, Dolansky, once the chief Czech planner, is still a deputy premier. It would appear therefore that Stalin and his advisers regarded the doubts of these people as more or less legitimate and not necessarily treasonable, though again and again resolving to ignore them.

THE utopian thesis that an all-out armament effort—which was deemed necessary—and "progress towards Communism," i.e., the raising of the general Soviet standard of living—which was desirable—could be pursued simultaneously had already been rejected by the Politburo back in 1949, when Vosnesensky was overthrown. We know now that it was against him chiefly that Stalin directed his assertion of the reality of objective economic laws in his last pamphlet, *The Economic Problems of Socialism*. But though Stalin recognized the necessity of choosing between an all-out arms program and the raising of standards of living, right up until 1952 he stuck to his belief that arms production at the pace required by his foreign policy could be continued indefinitely—and at the expense of standards of living. For as long as the Kremlin continued, or felt it had to continue, its Cold War policy, economic retreat was impossible. But once the recognition of economic failure compels a retreat, then foreign policy has to retreat too.

It would seem that top-level discussions about the possibility of a simultaneous new "turn" in both economy and foreign policy began while Stalin was still alive, and even had something to do with the jockeying for position of his prospective heirs. Stalin's above-mentioned pamphlet, published on the eve of the 19th Party Congress last year, showed that the decision then still hung in the balance. On the one hand, Stalin went so far in this pamphlet as to make the primacy of the production of means of production part of the very definition of socialism, even hinting at the need to overcome the crisis in agricultural deliveries by destroying what was left of the peasants' independence rather than by granting them concessions. On the other hand, his analysis of the international situation, with its assertion that conflict among the imperialists would more likely lead to war than would the fundamental conflict between the imperialists and the Soviet Union, could be used to justify ending the Cold War and reducing the armament effort. Yet in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

last months of Stalin's life the Cold War party in the Kremlin, strengthened possibly by the shock of General Eisenhower's victory, seemed to have regained the upper hand. Late in November the trial of Slansky, who had been originally attacked as a head of the Cold War party, was suddenly turned around into an attack on all past attempts at a moderate economic policy, and also made the occasion for an anti-Semitic spy scare. The arrest of the Kremlin doctors in January seems likewise to have been used in a final effort to create an atmosphere of war hysteria and make the continuation of the Cold War, with its attendant economic sacrifices, appear inevitable.

This desperate effort ceased suddenly with Stalin's death. It appears that conclusive reports about the impossibility of achieving the economic targets of the Cold War, and particularly about the extent of the agricultural crisis, reached his heirs during the weeks immediately following. The decisions to end the fighting in Korea, release the Kremlin doctors, and order an economic retreat, all seem to have been taken within those few weeks.

SINCE then the Soviet leaders have steered a zigzag course in the attempt to work out a new and more flexible foreign policy, while the struggle for power inside Russia goes on by fits and starts. But the economic retreat has spread from one Communist country to another steadily and consistently. There have been few zigzags here.

In Eastern Germany and Hungary, the scene of the pilot experiments for the "new course," it was admitted that unwilling peasants had been forced into the collective farms, and would now be allowed to leave. The authority of these two satellite regimes was seriously shaken by such admissions. In Eastern Germany, the uprising of June 17 followed; in Hungary, peasants moved *en masse* to recover their collectivized acres; this threatened to disorganize the harvest and disrupt the whole structure of Communist power in the countryside. The official reaction in each case was a desperate effort to tighten the reins again, with frantic assertions that, after all, the past mistakes had been only of a minor order, while the "general line" had been correct. In all the other satellites and in Russia itself, the "new course" was now introduced by praising the achievements of the old one, and nowhere was the experiment of permitting peasants to leave the collectives repeated.

Apart from this, the "new course" resulted in more or less identical measures everywhere—before and after the East German rising and the Hungarian crisis, before and after the fall of Beria. First: the delivery quotas and taxes of the peasants were reduced, and their arrears cancelled; in some places—Russia particularly—the prices paid the peasants for their deliveries were increased. Second: the prices of food and consumer goods were lowered. Third: emergency imports of food, feeds, textiles, and leather were hurried through, and some of the stocks of these items in the state reserves put on the market, in order to provide consumer goods for the increased purchasing power; this also meant that foreign exchange was no longer to be devoted exclusively to the capital goods program. Fourth: the economic plans were adjusted to the increase in consumers' buying power; the state's investment funds were reduced; this, with the redirection of foreign exchange, provided for a lower investment rate, a higher increase in consumer-goods production, and a slower increase in heavy industry. The extent of all these changes has been different from country to country, but their direction remains the same.

However, this new course can be pursued effectively only if the Soviet leaders adjust their foreign policy to the slowing down of their armament effort—that is, if they try to remove the incentives to rearmament in the West by "normalizing" diplomatic relations and reducing international tensions.

IN THE view of the Soviet leaders, the economic retreat and any accompanying effort they may make to slacken pressure in the Cold War do not imply change in the basic character of their regime, or in its basic antagonism to the capitalist world. On the contrary, it is hoped that the new policy will enable the Soviet world, in "peaceful coexistence" with its enemies, to strengthen its own position and that of the Communist movements elsewhere until the next opportunity emerges to take the revolutionary offensive without major risk. It is hoped, moreover, that the new policy will serve to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consolidate further the totalitarian regime in the USSR and its satellites, and that the slowdown of the arms race will provoke economic crisis in the capitalist world, while the revolutionary movements in the underdeveloped countries continue to undermine the international position of the Western powers. The Soviet leaders believe that today, as in the middle 20's and the 30's, a smoothing over if not settlement of outstanding issues of conflict, and a normalization of diplomatic relations will serve their purpose better than international tensions kept at fever pitch.

But the Cold War cannot be liquidated without major concessions to the West. This faces the Soviet leadership with some extremely difficult decisions to make at a time when the regime itself is in a state of flux and the issue of supreme power not yet settled. How far the Soviet leadership will have to retreat, at home and abroad, is linked up with that issue.

That this issue itself should bulk so large is owing to the unique and highly artificial character of the Stalinist regime. The purges of the 30's, while decapitating the party that had carried Stalin to power, also decapitated the newly emerged bureaucratic upper class, sparing only its more timid and pusillanimous members. This surviving "rump," tending as it did towards conservatism, was forced into a totalitarian party that continued to maintain and justify its rule by permanent revolution—though now become permanent revolution from above. At the present moment, the question is whether this unnatural fusion of bureaucrats and revolutionaries can outlive its creator.

There are indeed powerful forces in the Soviet regime tending away from revolution and towards "bureaucratic conservatism." Most of the present leaders, from Malenkov down, have little or no connection with the Bolshevik revolution; conditioned by managerial training and administrative experience, they tend to think in terms of efficiency rather than of doctrinal orthodoxy. And they have had, moreover, to begin their regime with a forced retreat. This retreat is bound to be popular with those they rule but it could be attempted only by an open break with Stalinist tradition, Stalinist ideology—and Stalin's personal agents.

To insure his control over the state machine and coordinate its various branches, whatever their divergent interests, Stalin had built up a personal machine, or secretariat, with hundreds of members. This machine had agents entrenched in every part of the administration who controlled their nominal superiors and guaranteed Stalin's right to intervene anywhere at any time. I share the opinion of those students of Soviet affairs who believe that the frame-up of the Moscow doctors was prepared by Stalin's machine, and that the military leaders named as the intended victims of the "plot" were in sympathy with the machine's aims at that time: that is, they sided with Stalin on the eve of his death in opposing any retreat on the economic or foreign front. Once he was dead, however, his machine was immediately smashed under the slogan of "collective leadership."

If Stalin's personal machine had to be liquidated in order to clear the way for retreat, the liquidation of important parts of Stalinist ideology was necessary to rationalize the retreat. Stalin had laid down that the priority of the production of means of production was essential to socialism; but now Malenkov has admitted that heavy industry's preponderance over consumer-goods production has reached unendurable proportions, and he has promised relief. Stalin had demanded that the "delivery resistance" of the collective farms be broken by gradually eliminating what remained of their nominal freedom to dispose of produce on the open market; Malenkov and Khrushchev are now offering increased incentives to the farmers, have lowered their delivery quotas, and, after years of bitter struggle to reduce the scope of the collective farmers' individual plots, now offer special tax concessions on these. Stalin saw the future development towards Communism as entailing the gradual disappearance of production for the market, i.e. of internal trade; but Malenkov now gives special attention to the improvement of domestic trade, and Mikoyan, who has been specially assigned to this task, proclaims the need to learn from capitalism.

Though there has as yet been no explicit repudiation of Stalin's teachings, their liquidation goes on. The abrupt dampening of his personal cult and the abandonment of the habit of quoting him in support of every

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argument constituted only the first step. The second was the publication on July 25 of this year, the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Bolshevik faction of the old Russian Social Democratic party, of some new "theses" on party history that barely mentioned Stalin, referred to none of his principal writings—though to all those of Lenin—and passed over in complete silence the official *Short Course in the History of the CPSU* that was published in 1938 and later included in Stalin's collected works—a book which has served as party bible for millions of Communists the world over. Yet even here the Kremlin follows no straight line, but backs and fills—for the internal struggle is not yet over.

THE sharpest break with Stalinist legend so far was the release, in Khrushchev's report to the Central Committee, of figures showing that after twenty-five years of collectivization the Soviet Union has fewer cows than in 1928, and indeed fewer than czarist Russia in 1916. Such a damaging disclosure was not required to justify the immediate policy changes announced by Khrushchev: it would have been enough to admit the failures of the last year or two. This deliberate revelation of a fundamental fact that had been so long and carefully concealed only makes sense if interpreted as preparing the way for further far-reaching policy changes—changes that would not only affect farm prices and delivery quotas, but the very structure of relations between town and country.

Since the Soviet regime as now constituted cannot relax the collective farm system without running the risk of an immediate general collapse, the only such structural change conceivable is the gradual abolition of compulsory deliveries at fixed prices. Khrushchev's speech contained indications that just such a change was being contemplated.

The system of compulsory deliveries at fixed prices considerably lower than market prices is as old in Russia as the Five Year Plans, and the need for such deliveries was historically one of the reasons for herding the peasants into collectives so fast. But Tito, in Yugoslavia, succeeded in abolishing the forced-delivery system—and thereby greatly improving his relations with the peasants—before permission to dissolve the collectives was ever contemplated, and there is evidence that the new Soviet leaders have been quietly but carefully studying the Yugoslav experiment. For instance, Bruno Leuschner, a chief planner in East Germany, in discussing ways of improving the quality and variety of consumer goods, has suggested a number of measures that are plain copies of "Titoist" reforms.

But once the exclusive concentration on heavy industry and arms is given up, and the need recognized to improve standards of living in order to obtain better results from work, it soon becomes apparent that a mere change in planning figures is not enough. The methods, too, of planning must be changed, to take account of human beings as they actually are. The logic of this becomes compelling, however, only when the doctrinal and dogmatic shell has been broken, and eyes have been opened to the evidence of daily experience—which was what happened in Yugoslavia after Tito's break with Stalinism. In Russia, that break is still far from being as deep as in Yugoslavia, but economic pressure is working in that direction: technology, we see in the Soviet press, tends to replace ideology; managerial proficiency, proved by results, has become the test of the good party man. (No totalitarian party, however, can rule without ideology: if the Communist leaders abandon their old dogmas without putting anything in their place, they may save the people of Russia, but not themselves.)

The retreat from totalitarian dogmatism, the way to relaxation, flexibility, and experiment is not smooth. The stalwarts of Stalinist orthodoxy, the diehards of the permanent revolution and the periodic purge, have been defeated for the time being—but not liquidated. The weight of traditional authority, the experience of a foreign service trained in Cold War tactics, and of an intelligence service imbued with uncompromising hostility to all "capitalist" states, are on the side of the diehards—as is also the inertia and sheer will to survive of a vast propaganda and terror machine. Some of the odd quirks of satellite policy that bewilder Westerners, like the recent revival of church persecution in Poland and the appearance of long articles praising Stalin's *Short Course,* and even Zhdanov, in the East German press, may express the resistance of the diehards. Be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hind the usual screen of outward conformity, we may imagine them biding their time, waiting for the failure of the new masters and the chance to strike back. In one sphere of Soviet policy above all, the resistance of these diehards seems still strong enough to prevent an effective and consistent "new course": that sphere is foreign policy.

WE BEGAN with the claim that the Soviet regime must try to end the Cold War because of the impossibility of achieving its armament goals. We now have to admit that so far its effort to this end has been a limited and hesitant one, and the retreat on the foreign front has been far less consistent or steady than on the economic or even ideological one. The one definite major change has been the decision to end the fighting in Korea by accepting the Indian resolution; there have also been the steps taken to normalize relations with Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia, and the concessions made to the Austrian government. But on the two largest unsettled questions of world politics today —Germany and Korea—nothing definite and tangible has come from the Kremlin. In the first months after Stalin's death the new rulers did seem to be taking a fresh approach and genuinely seeking to arrive at a compromise by negotiation, but since then —and especially since the June uprising in East Germany and Beria's fall—they have relapsed into the same old diplomatic shadow-boxing and the same old rhetoric of denunciation. The very fact that Molotov and Vyshinsky still function as the mouthpieces of the Soviet foreign office would show that the Soviet regime does not yet consider a real international settlement possible, or indeed urgent.

Why should a government which, on our own showing, urgently needs a relaxation of international tension hesitate to make a real attempt to bring one about? There seem to be two reasons. On the one hand, even the most favorable German and Korean compromise still conceivable for Russia would mean a costly retreat on her part. At the same time the United States shows little inclination to negotiate any compromise at all. On the other hand, a costly and difficult settlement no longer seems necessary to the Russians in order to obtain a *détente*: the end of the fighting in Korea, together with certain minor conciliatory gestures, has already served to increase Western resistance to a further armament effort and soften the Western diplomatic front. From the Soviet point of view there is no point in embarking on new, earnestly meant negotiations if the enemy is neither strong enough to extort them nor flexible enough to offer sufficient inducements.

TAKE the German question, for example. Fear of a rearmed Western Germany allied to the United States has been one of the main preoccupations of Soviet policy since 1950. Any compromise on German unity that would mean surrendering Eastern Germany could make sense from the Russian point of view only if a reunited Germany were excluded from military collaboration with the West. But the United States has always insisted on freedom of action for a reunited Germany—that is, freedom to join the West—and Dr. Adenauer has made it clear, with the full approval of the West German electorate, that a free and united Germany would join the West not only politically and economically (this, Moscow would have to expect in any case) but also militarily. As the Russians see it, there is nothing to gain and much to lose in a settlement that gave a reunited Germany such freedom of action; nor could a formal non-aggression pact with a Western alliance that included Germany be regarded as any improvement.

But while the Kremlin has been offered no expectation of preventing Germany's military collaboration with the West by diplomatic concessions, it has good reason to think that it may still be able to do that without concessions. French opposition to the ratification of the European Defense Community, or to any other formula for German rearmament, has been the major factor in delaying the EDC so far; and no specific Soviet concessions have been needed to encourage that opposition—the general impression that the Soviets are becoming "more reasonable" has been enough. Thus America's threat to rally Germany to her side against Russia remains an empty one.

The Korean situation appears to be fundamentally similar. Here America's commitments to Syngman Rhee seem to bar any conceivable compromise solution. Yet failure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to arrive at a peace treaty carries no real threat for the Soviets since a resumption of the war by the West, though desired by the South Korean government, would be opposed by Great Britain and America's other allies in the United Nations. Moscow has nothing to gain by a settlement, now that the cease-fire has achieved the essential purpose of calming the international atmosphere; nor has it anything to lose by avoiding such a settlement.

If this analysis be valid, the West's own rigidity and disunity may prevent her from exploiting the USSR's present weakness. And by preventing a real liquidation of the Cold War now, we may strengthen those elements in Russia that want to return to Stalinist orthodoxy and the atmosphere of the besieged fortress, while weakening the forces working to relax the party regime. But what is the alternative? Should we keep sending the Russians invitations that they reject? Should we hurry to offer them concessions at a moment when they are weaker than they have been for years? Should we avoid anything that might "provoke" them lest they turn Stalinist again?

Of course not. Unconditional "softness" in dealing with the Soviet government would be as vain as unconditional "toughness," and perhaps even more dangerous. The real problem is not what concessions to make to the Russians, but how to offer them a way to get a settlement by making limited but real concessions to us. The Russians have been weakened, but not defeated. They are due for a retreat, but not for a surrender. They should be told clearly that they cannot get a relaxation of international tensions by just sitting back and doing nothing, but only by consenting to a settlement that advances the frontiers of freedom at their expense. And they should also be told that we are ready to negotiate with them at any time over the exact price.

WHENEVER such a settlement by negotiation is proposed the cry of "appeasement" goes up, and Munich, Teheran, and Yalta are called to mind. But there is a difference. At Munich the Western democracies, under the threat of force, handed over to an aggressive dictator territory that was not his. At Teheran and Yalta the Western democracies, swayed by the wartime alliance against Hitler, mistook the nature of Stalinist Russia, and voluntarily surrendered countries that Russia could not have wrested from the West by force (though in part they merely sanctioned the occupation of countries that had already been overrun by the Red Army).

What is proposed at present is negotiation as a means, not of retreating before totalitarianism, but of compelling it to retreat before democracy. Those who deny the possibility of succeeding in this ask us in effect to accept the absurd dogma that, though dictators may gain their ends by diplomacy, democracies can never do so, but can advance only by force.

However, there is a more serious objection. Any negotiated settlement, whatever its form, will amount to a new delimitation of the Western and Soviet spheres of influence. Even if the result this time is a Western advance and a Soviet retreat, many peoples would still be left under the totalitarian yoke; by agreeing to a settlement, we shall appear to be sanctioning the continuance of this immoral state of affairs and betraying friends who remain behind the Iron Curtain. Would it not be preferable morally, and even wiser politically, to maintain pressure at maximum, in the hope of ultimately bringing about the total collapse of the Soviet system?

I shall not discuss the question of whether the West—which at present lacks the unity and resolution required to carry on concerted negotiations for even limited gains—has enough stamina to maintain such pressure in the face of all the temptations to compromise that would be offered to separate Western states. The decisive point is that the opponents of partial advance by negotiation have never been able to explain in just what other way they intend to liberate the world from Soviet power. Nobody seriously advocates war, but if that is excluded, liberation by negotiation is the only alternative. Liberation by declamation is not enough.

Now it is in the nature of all negotiated settlements that their results should be limited. But their limitedness does not necessarily deprive such results of dynamic potentialities. There is no reason why the dynamism of success and failure, of advance and retreat, should not work in favor of democracy as much as it has worked in the past in favor of totalitarianism. At a time

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when the Soviet leadership is being forced to retreat in the face of self-incurred economic difficulties, when its need for an international breathing spell is urgent, and when its shell of dogmatic self-assurance is cracking, and new forces are making themselves felt underneath the surface—at this time a negotiated advance of democracy, based on the maintenance and strengthening of our economic and military advantages, may give rise to economic repercussions all over the Soviet world. It is the task of Western diplomacy to make such an advance possible.

POSTSCRIPT: Molotov's note rejecting the Western invitation to a four-power conference on Germany and Austria, Voroshilov's speech on the recent anniversary of the October Revolution, with its marked reversion to Stalinist ideology, and the reopening of the Red Square mausoleum with Stalin's mummy now lying next to Lenin's—all this would seem to show that Stalinism has regained the upper hand in Russia. Western rigidity, coupled with Western disunity, has probably played a role in evoking this reaction. But nothing has happened so far to show it is more than another swing of the pendulum in an unstable regime—there being no evidence yet of any final decision in the struggle for internal power in Moscow.

Some Western observers conclude from latest events that Moscow has finally decided not to ease up on the Cold War, and that hence we ourselves must continue to build up military strength undiverted by mirages of negotiated settlement. Other observers think that the Kremlin has now become too frightened to risk any change in the status quo, and that we would be wise to accept a tacit settlement on this basis. Both conclusions, in my opinion, are premature.

But the status quo no longer corresponds to the real balance of power, and to accept it just because the Russians are digging their toes in would mean to renounce the fruits of our increased strength merely because our diplomacy has so far not discovered a way of reaping them. The Russian refusal to negotiate a German settlement right now does not prove that the Cold War must continue indefinitely. The Stalinist old guard has strengthened its hold, not because Russia has suddenly become stronger again, but because it now sees an apparent way out of the necessity of compromise and negotiation in a gamble on the inability of the West to implement its plans. Our only effective answer remains to prove we can implement them—by obtaining French agreement to German rearmament either within the EDC or in some other form—and then to declare that we are prepared to delay execution during a limited period of negotiations.

Those in the Kremlin who oppose a partial settlement with the West at this time have yet another argument, however. Like many Western experts, they feel that in an age of atomic long-range weapons the danger of hypothetical German ground divisions is far less serious, and that negotiation is not worthwhile which leaves American air bases in Europe undisturbed; if negotiations are to be effective, they must grapple with this threat. Though they have not yet asked for the dismantling of these bases as a pre-condition for negotiations, the Russians have said that these should be one of the principal subjects of any conference.

In the nature of things, this is a matter which the West could not discuss in the context of a provisional and partial settlement, but only in that of a permanent and total one—and for which it, the West, would have to ask a correspondingly higher price: there could be no dismantling of the system of American bases without the dissolution of the Soviet postwar empire and the general freeing of its enslaved peoples. From all we know, Soviet leaders are still very far from recognizing the need for such a wholesale surrender of their conquests. If they continue to insist on discussing everything at once, it will mean therefore that there is no point yet in discussing anything at all with them and that the Cold War must go on. But we have yet to see whether the Russians will continue so to insist if Western policy on partial issues such as Germany becomes both more convincingly united and more flexible than it has hitherto been.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DICTATORS, DEMOCRACY, AND LATIN AMERICAN JEWRY

Some Political Paradoxes of Our Hemisphere

BENNO WEISER

AT THE height of the excitement over Soviet anti-Semitism, a South American delegate to the UN said to me, "You Jews are really unlucky. First, Hitler persecuted you. Then Stalin. And now to top it off, your new savior has arisen in the person of Generalissimo Trujillo."

While temporary leader of his country's delegation to the UN, the Dominican Republic's strong man had, in February 1953, come out strongly against Soviet anti-Semitism, demanding UN action against it, and offering shelter to up to 25,000 Jews from countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Nor was Trujillo the only Latin American dictator to take this stand. On January 28, 1953, Argentina's General Juan Domingo Perón again declared his opposition to anti-Semitism, at home as well as abroad. He added that the only solution of the problem was to strengthen Israel, and promised to do his share in this. And this wasn't all. He also announced that, though the natural haven for Jewish refugees from the East was Israel, Argentina's doors too would be open to them. A day later the Cuban dictator, General Fulgencio Batista, convoked his Council of Ministers, who exhorted the UN members to unite in an effort to stop the Soviet persecution of Jews. And the Cuban Foreign Office cabled an offer to Mr. Sharett to bring the matter up in the second half of the seventh UN Assembly.

Of course not only the strong men of Latin America took this stand. As early as November 1952, Dr. José Vicente Trujillo, head of Ecuador's delegation to the UN, had denounced the Prague trials in the UN Assembly. The Brazilian senate had adopted a resolution condemning Russia's anti-Semitic policy, and Arturo Olivarria, Chilean Foreign Minister, had promised that Chile would support Israel "unconditionally" should the question of Soviet anti-Semitism come up in the UN. Similar forceful statements followed from Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Uruguay at the UN Assembly. It should be noted that, with the exception of Argentina, in none of the above-mentioned countries do the Jews number more than 1.5 per cent of the population.

Latin America has shown similar feelings toward the Jewish people on previous occasions. There would have been no Partition Resolution on Palestine without the Latin American vote. Whereas the proportion of all the other votes was 20 in favor to 12 opposed, the Latin American votes went 13 to 1, which accounted for the necessary two-thirds majority and an ample margin beyond that. And since then the Latin American countries have been Israel's steadfast supporters against the many Arab attacks on her in the UN.

MANY of the cherished political generalizations that we learned in the 30's have shown their inadequacy on more than one score in recent years. Here BENNO WEISER demonstrates how they fail when applied to present-day Latin America, where "democracy" and "dictatorship" do not mean what minds oriented to Europe might assume they do—especially with reference to the Jews—or at least not without considerable revision. Mr. Weiser, though born in Europe, is a veteran of Latin American affairs and knows Latin America at first hand. After his departure from Vienna, at whose university he completed his medical studies before the *Anschluss,* he lived in Ecuador where he won a continent-wide reputation as a newspaper columnist. Now thirty-nine years old, he is on the staff of the Jewish Agency in New York. Mr. Weiser last appeared in these pages in March 1949 with a discussion of how the movie *Gentleman's Agreement* was received in South America.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS does not mean that anti-Semitism does not exist in Latin America. Only last year, dangerous situations arose in Bolivia and Costa Rica. Junior deputies to the Ecuadorian parliament made local headlines by interspersing their maiden speeches with anti-Semitic slanders. In Chile, some fifteen Jewish families on vacation in the resort village of Zapallar were forced to leave after a siege by a mob of youngsters, who stoned the houses they were in. There were also some bombings and attempted bombings of Jewish buildings in Argentina.

But to judge the Jewish situation in Latin America from such incidents would be as wrong as to judge the Jewish situation in the United States from the Miami bombings of last year. The more than 650,000 Jews who reside in the twenty countries of Latin America enjoy—as Jews—the same freedom and prosperity as their Gentile neighbors. If they feel more insecure in one country than another, that is because the general situation, as it affects every citizen, is unstable there, rather than because of anything specially threatening to the Jew.

What evidences of anti-Semitism there are in the different countries of Latin America certainly manifest no central, ominous pattern. Until Hitler's demise, Nazi propaganda made the Jewish situation somewhat uncomfortable in some places, but that has now subsided, and although prominent Nazis have found their way to South America, they have refrained so far from anti-Semitic agitation. The struggle for the Jewish state has created hard feelings between the Jewish and the no less numerous Arab colonies of Latin America, and Arab propagandists have recently appeared in Argentina and other countries; but their publications are concerned with reducing Latin American support of Israel rather than fomenting hostility towards local Jewry.

From time to time an overzealous Catholic priest will deliver a rabble-rousing Easter sermon, but there have also been many expressions of friendship toward Jews on the part of Catholic clerics, and were it not for the periodic agitation about the status of Jerusalem, there would be hardly any unfriendly mention of Jews in the specifically Catholic press. In general, what anti-Semitism exists in Latin America would seem to be just another facet of an underlying xenophobia which is as prevalent in Latin America as is its opposite, hospitality and friendliness toward strangers.

IMMIGRATION is another story. With a few exceptions, the doors of Latin America are now closed to Jewish immigration. The few Jews that get in are either close relatives of long-established residents and/or have to buy their way in with fees to lawyers that do not go to the lawyers alone. Some countries, such as Peru, will not even grant a visitor's visa to a Jew unless he is fortunate enough to be an American citizen. Ecuador has the best record in this respect. The doors of Argentina, too, are open, but by no means as wide as one would suppose from Perón's above-mentioned statement.

These difficulties are partly an aftermath of the rush of refugees immediately before and during World War II, when Jewish immigration to certain countries was converted into a racket. That racket was finally stopped by indignant governments, to the disappointment of bribe-hungry consuls—but also of Jews who had to leave Europe or else perish and thus were ready to submit to extortion. Conditions have changed in the meantime, but some people have not yet become accustomed to the idea of giving away for nothing what had produced handsome profits in the past.

But there are other and deeper reasons for the present exclusion of Jewish immigrants. Most Latin American countries have been dreaming for years of a flood of immigrant farmers to settle their empty spaces. Although they have all benefited from Jewish immigration, which brought trained specialists, new industries, and businessmen who contributed toward raising the standard of living, the Latin American statesman still identifies Jewish immigration with its most visible part, the city-dwelling storekeeper, and feels disappointed in his original dream of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the pioneering farmer. Other immigrants may be equally disappointing, but the Jewish immigrant is more conspicuous.

In addition, Jews have recently come to be regarded as unassimilable in Latin America. Before Hitler, assimilation proceeded at a rapid pace. Linguistic adaptation presented no problem at all to the Sephardim, and was remarkably easy for some of the East European Jews, especially those from Rumania. A shortage of Jewish women made intermarriage or mixed extra-marital relations, usually legalized in the end, rather frequent. It was Hitlerism, the new immigration which followed it, and especially Zionism that put an end to this trend. Both the Jew and the Gentile became more conscious of Jewishness. Today it is taken for granted in Latin America that a Jew is identified by more than his religion. It is considered natural that he should have a special relation to Israel; after all, the Latin American himself has a similar bond to Spain, to which he refers as *"madre patria"*—be it the Spain of the kings, the Republic, or Franco. (Once, when addressing a Jewish meeting in Buenos Aires, Perón referred to Israel's envoy, Jacob Tsur, as "your minister," and one can be sure he was not being sarcastic.) But if the Jew's new nationalism is accepted as natural, it is all the more felt to make him unassimilable to Latin nationalism.

Another factor to reverse the tide of assimilation has been the disappearance of counter-attractions to Jewish nationalism. Latin American democracy is going through a serious illness, and the young Jewish intellectual who might formerly have been drawn into the politics of the larger society can hardly find inviting today the prospect of becoming a rubber stamp in a puppet parliament.

Venezuela's exiled democratic ex-president, Romulo Betancourt, put it to me this way a year ago: "We are a young nation with an underdeveloped nationalism. We need immigrants who integrate quickly, and not only after generations." He confessed ruefully that under the short-lived regime of his Accion Democratica party, Venezuela had discriminated against Jewish immigrants. But although he regretted the "ridiculous" way in which his immigration policy was used to bar even Jewish visitors as well as immigrants, he defended the policy itself. "Look at me," he said, indicating his pigmented skin, "can I be a racist? I admire the Jewish people. In my proclamations to the Venezuelan underground I ask my followers frequently to inspire themselves with the patience and endurance with which Jews fought and achieved their statehood. If there were a question of saving human lives, I would open the gates of Venezuela to as many Jews as wanted to come. But I still think we do not need a single fur shop more in our subtropical Caracas, and have troubles enough in keeping our rural population from moving to the cities."

Aside, however, from the question of immigration, the position of Jews in Latin America remains good. And, to return to the seeming paradox with which we began, there is perhaps less trouble for Jews where strong-arm governments are installed than in the more democratic countries. This can be explained in part by the fact that dictatorial government frowns on any political agitation that does not serve its own ends, and a government-controlled press offers less room to anti-Semitic journalism than does a free press. When President Ulate of Costa Rica was questioned about the anti-Semitic campaign being mounted in his country—generally considered the most democratic north of Uruguay—by an alliance of native businessmen and some of their Arab and Spanish colleagues, he implied that freedom of speech included the right to express anti-Semitic sentiment. Although the campaign has subsided in Costa Rica since then, and will certainly not begin again under liberal President José Figueres' regime, the fact remains that Jews are far more comfortable in neighboring Nicaragua, which is governed by one of the shrewdest and perhaps most broad-minded of all dictators south of Mexico—Anastasio Somoza.

In Uruguay, Latin America's most ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vanced and democratic country, one province imposed an extra tax last year on Jewish funerals that was fifty times higher than the tax on other funerals, and, in spite of protests by institutions and newspapers, it is still in force as these lines are being written. (The literal wording of the tax law is "funerals in private cemeteries"—but the only private cemetery in the province happens to be Jewish.)

THE many manifestations of sympathy, friendship, and even generosity extended to Jewish communities and to Israel (which in Latin America is considered these communities' normal extension) by some Latin American dictators can by no means be judged altogether opportunistic or insincere. Generalissimo Trujillo's latest offer was preceded by a similar offer at the Evian Conference in 1938 (his, sadly enough, was the only offer of the kind at that time). He was then ready to admit 100,000 Jewish settlers, and it was certainly not his fault that only about 1,000 took advantage of his invitation. When I visited the Dominican Republic last year, I found a mere 200 Jews left on the idyllic little bay of Sosua, which the Generalissimo had given freely to the DORSA, a subsidiary of the Joint Distribution Committee. The other Jewish settlers had left because the emergency that had made farmers out of city-dwellers and professionals had passed. But every one of those settlers who remained had nothing but praise for the generosity of the Dominican government.

I have heard much speculation about Trujillo's motives. It is said that he wanted to increase the proportion of whites in his partly Negro country. Many of the leading families of the Dominican Republic claim Marrano ancestry, and this, too, might explain Trujillo's sympathy with the Jews. Others express the opinion that Latin American strong men think that by being nice to Jews they will flatter the United States. True, the myth, spread by Nazi propaganda, that the United States and "international Jewry" are one, and that Roosevelt was and Truman is Jewish, is widely believed in Latin America, but this would obviously not explain Perón's friendliness, for he has seldom tried to court American favor.

Perón's first statement on Jews and Zionism, in 1945, could have been interpreted as demagogic because at that very time the walls of Buenos Aires were covered with slogans reading *Long Live Perón, Death to the Jews!* Nevertheless, he has since then backed up what he said, and repudiated the *nacionalistas* who put up those signs. Today there can be no doubt that Perón had little to do even then with the anti-Semitic activity of this extremist fringe among his supporters; victims of wishful thinking, the latter soon lost whatever political importance they had had.

And Perón's record has remained clear on the Jewish question. Manifestations of anti-Semitism have declined in Argentina as the official line has become more explicit. A bill outlawing racial discrimination was passed. The status of thousands of Jewish immigrants who had smuggled themselves into the country was legalized, and some thirty prominent Jewish intellectuals stranded in France were admitted.

Of course, General Perón has his own way of dealing with Jewish matters, and he has made his hand-picked Organizacion Israelita Argentina the channel through which most Jewish-Argentinian relations and even a part of Israeli-Argentinian relations have to pass. Yet even the absence of Jewish political support has not changed his policy. Perón knew very well that he was elected president in 1945 without the Jewish vote, and even when, after years of being wooed by the government, the predominantly Jewish districts of Buenos Aires in the last elections defeated a Peronista candidate, who happened to be a Jew, and gave the opposition party's candidate a majority, Perón still showed no resentment.

If the Perón government's attitude towards domestic Jewry can be considered friendly, its attitude towards the State of Israel has to be called downright benevolent. Although it is typical of the traditional Ar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gentinian tendency towards neutrality that this benevolence does not make itself felt markedly in the UN, where a vote for Israel generally means a vote against the Arab nations, the Israel-Argentina commercial treaty probably constitutes the most favorable that the Jewish state has yet concluded with any government.

An observer unfamiliar with the Argentinian tradition of neutrality might be puzzled to see that Argentina nevertheless remains, like Franco's Spain, a principal refuge for prominent or technically gifted Nazi exiles. But it must be said that this indicates no feeling against Jews.

To complete our survey: Peru's Jews have not felt for many years as comfortable as under the present military dictatorship, and Venezuelan Jewry has no complaints against the military regime which now, after a short interlude of democracy, once more controls their country. Colombia under Laureano Gomez—recently ousted by military coup—had become Latin America's chief theater of fratricide and subterranean civil war, but the Gomez government's attitude toward its Jewish subjects remained correct, whereas Protestants complained about persecution. Nicaragua's dictator, Anastasio Somoza, has Jewish intimates, and has been extremely helpful to Israel. And Cuba's Fulgencio Batista maintains that friendly attitude toward his country's Jewish community which has become a well-established tradition on that island.

BEFORE trying to explain the phenomenon of the Latin American strong man's friendliness to the Jews it becomes necessary to dwell on the phenomenon of the Latin American dictatorship itself. Of course, one must keep away from generalizations in speaking of twenty independent states. Nevertheless, the following factors apply more or less from the Rio Grande to the Plata: there was first the native Indian society, organized in monarchic and tribal systems centering around the king and the *cacique*. To this aboriginal *Fuehrerprinzip* another one was added by the *conquista*, the conquest by absolutist and hierarchical Spain. The colonial feudal system made the *latifundista*, the big landowner, unlimited boss over his slaves, servants, and laborers. The Catholic Church, the European-stock oligarchy, and the foreign mercantile exploiters favored, for different reasons, the concentration of power in a few hands. Even after the arrival of democracy, illiteracy automatically excluded large parts of the population in many countries from participating in any political activity. And then there were the armies, which, starting as armies of liberation against foreign rule, developed their power-hungry generals and their attitude of the superiority of the military man over the civil administrator, of the *macho*, the male with guts, over the intellectual. All these factors together contributed to *caudillismo*, the *caudillo* being at the same time a military strong man, a daring hero, an ideological guide—however primitive—and, at times, even a fatherly figure.

DEMOCRACY, which has had its ups and downs in Latin America, is down again today. During World War II, the term dictator did not sound good, and an absolutist regime found it necessary to consider what the repercussions would be in the United States if an exiled opponent called it Nazi or fascist. Since 1945 democracy has become weaker, and not only in Latin America. Franco's regime in Spain has been almost universally accepted as here to stay. Nazis have become *salonfaehig*. The fight against Communism has given new life to elements who may be dangerous to democracy but whose anti-Communism is unquestioned. And the very fact that a general, however different from the kind of generals Latin America usually produces, has become President of the United States, serves to encourage the Latin American military strong man.

But, also, the differences between democracies and dictatorships have narrowed as the former have become less liberal and the latter less oppressive. Dictatorial government is not quite in the same disrepute as a few years ago, and most dictators can now get

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

along with their neighbors and, most important of all, with the United States.

At the Pan American Conference in Montevideo in 1933, the American government, which under Roosevelt was abandoning the "big stick" policy in Latin America for the "good neighbor" one, accepted the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Latin American states. In 1945, in the same city of Montevideo, an exiled leader of the Argentinian Radical party told me that if the United States did not do "something," a "catastrophe" would occur in Argentina. Today we often find the very same people who used to regard American intervention in their countries' affairs as "Yankee imperialism" looking toward "the great democracy of the North" for help against their enemies at home. And for its part, the State Department, which was formerly reluctant to recognize *de facto* governments, has apparently tired of trying to cope with an unceasing avalanche of military coups and revolutions, and now automatically establishes relations with whatever government is capable of maintaining law and order (or, let us say, just order). Had it not pursued this policy, it would have had to close, at one time or another in recent years, more than half the American embassies in the Hemisphere.

Because democracy in Latin America so often serves only a wealthy minority, adherence to it can be claimed even by those who fight a democratically established regime. During the summer of 1952 I was chatting with Ecuador's eternal revolutionary, Carlos Guevara Moreno, then mayor of Guayaquil —and now in exile—and I asked him about his political theories. He answered: "Do you want to know whether I am a democrat? It depends on what you call democracy. You know that two million of our three million inhabitants are Indians and illiterate and that only about three hundred thousand people participate in elections; that mostly those who have enough time or money to campaign have a chance to be elected; that directly or indirectly the parliamentary majority will always represent the interests of the feudal class to which they belong. Who speaks for the millions who are not represented and who constitute the majority of the nation? I confess that I would not be interested in a constitutional government where a congress elected by a minority could block all the changes that are in the interest of the majority. If democracy means only adherence to certain formal procedures, you can have it. If it means to have at heart the interests of the majority, I believe I deserve the title of democrat."

The differences between the dictator and the democratic statesman in Latin America are not so clearly defined as one would suppose. Cuba's Batista, who became dictator last year by a *coup d'état,* had been a constitutional president in 1940. Ecuador's humanitarian, ascetic, and incorruptible president, José Maria Velasco Ibarra, assumed absolute powers on two occasions after having been duly elected, was overthrown twice, and then, returning from an exile of several years, won a third election by an overwhelming majority.* Brazil's Getulio Vargas and Chile's Carlos Ibanez del Campo won popular elections in spite of the fact that they had headed dictatorial regimes in the past.

Moreover, whether a Latin American ruler is a dictator or a democrat is less frequently a question of doctrine than of temperament or circumstances. In 1945, when I met Bolivia's Dr. Victor Paz Estenssoro, then Minister of Finance and the ideological backbone of the dictatorial Villaroel regime (which came to an end with Villaroel's murder a year later), I was only too pre-

*President Velasco Ibarra is probably one of the most extraordinary friends the Jewish people have ever had. Before firing a Director of Immigration in 1944 who had tried to strictly enforce Ecuador's immigration regulations, which compel immigrants to go into either industry or agriculture, he lectured him in the presence of a Jewish community leader: "Our regulations are for immigrants. But the Jews in our midst are not immigrants but refugees. I have tasted what exile means, and if they had forced me to become an industrialist or a peasant in Chile, I would have starved long ago. There will be only one law for the Jews in this country as long as I am president—the law of humanity."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pared to dislike a man who was so prominent in a hated regime. What I found was an earnest, clever, hard-working intellectual with whom I could not but feel sympathetic. Seven years later this same man, elected *in absentia* president of his country, returned from exile on the crest of a bloody revolution (precipitated by the unwillingness of the outvoted regime to surrender power to him) as a symbol of democracy and the fulfilment of the genuine desires of the majority of Bolivians.

WHATEVER the reasons, the history of the Latin American states is still, more than that of other countries, the history of individuals rather than of masses and ideologies. The opinion that one clear head can achieve more than many muddled or even many clear ones of different opinions has many partisans. The craving of the masses for a strong man is sensed by the democratic leaders and troubles the more sensitive among them.*

There is José Figueres of Costa Rica, who is at present Central America's outstanding democratic leader. After the annulment of the election of Otilio Ulate by President Picado in 1948, Figueres, a farmer-industrialist, became a soldier-statesman; collecting a handful of followers at his mountain hacienda and gathering others as he went, he overthrew Picado's government forces in a six weeks' civil war. At that moment the expected thing would have been for Figueres to grab all the power for himself. But after establishing law and order, and compensating the victims of the civil war, which had cost about 1,200 lives, he handed the government over to the elected President Otilio Ulate. During the next two years he himself campaigned patiently—and legally—for the presidency, which he won in the most recent election.

I accompanied Figueres on one of his electioneering tours, and I saw more vividly than ever before the dilemma of the democratic leader in a politically immature society: "You see," he said to me, "they want me to be their *caudillo*, whereas I just want to be their educator."

At a typical rally, in the movie theater of the village of Valverde Vega, the first rows were occupied by children, some of them under school age, with the adults behind them. And most of the latter were barefoot, sunburnt peasants who, although they were not the typical Indian *peones* of other Latin American countries, since Costa Rica is predominantly white, nevertheless presented an air of illiteracy. First came a succession of speakers making the typical campaign speeches of every era and every place. At the end of every sentence each speaker would raise his voice to give the cue for applause. A sentence that did not draw applause was obviously a failure, but on such occasions an elegant and otherwise well-mannered young man who traveled with us all the way, and had been introduced to me as a "shouting specialist," would produce a stentorian "*Viva* don Pepe Figueres!" and the crowd would answer with an amen-like "Viva!"

While waiting for Mr. Figueres' speech, I wondered how he could possibly bring the message of democracy to an audience so patently suited for demagoguery. He spoke quickly and fluently without raising his voice at the end of every sentence, thus shutting off applause. His listeners finally stopped listening for cues and holding their hands ready to clap, and I noticed that they then began to make a real effort to follow him as he explained the problems of their country. One saw him deliberately resisting temptations to which other men would have succumbed—and this was a man who, as a leader in revolution and war, had already given more than one proof of his capacity for rousing oratory. He is a unique leader for a backward country.

*One might point out, in connection with this matter of popular attitudes, that a corrupt democracy generally *looks* more corrupt than a corrupt dictatorship. In the absence of a free press and the presence of a secret police, a dictator can enrich himself without having to buy anybody's silence. In a corrupt democracy one has to bribe many politicians and newspapermen in order to escape unfavorable publicity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBVIOUSLY, it is a mistake to judge Latin American politics by American standards. While the average American politician starts his career as a district attorney or candidate for a state legislature, his Latin American counterpart starts it generally by being thrown into jail for a newspaper article or an incendiary speech at his university. While the American politician is campaigning for Congress, his Latin American equivalent is spending a few years in exile, frequently in poverty. In most cases he starts out as an idealist and reformer, but the "seven lean years" of exile tend to weaken his immunity to the temptations of the "fat years" that come if and when he wins power. If he manages to preserve his personal integrity, he will hardly be able to refuse favors to friends and supporters who stood by his side in bygone days. Perhaps he will be apprehensive of the day when he has to hand over the government to a successor who now opposes him with the same violence as he opposed his predecessor. He might try to secure the election of a friend who will collaborate with him, and he may pervert the administrative machinery to this end. Or he might be frightened into trying to perpetuate himself in power—not always because he desires power itself so much, but because he does not know how to get out of it.

It would be a still greater mistake to judge Latin American politics by European standards, and borrow labels from recent European history to describe Latin American strong men. *Caciquismo* and *caudillismo* are older than Fascism and Nazism. Of course, all dictators have something in common, and there was a psychological basis for the admiration that Hitler and Mussolini (but not their ideologies) elicited from some of the dictators of Latin America. But there were other dictators who loathed the Duce and the Fuehrer, and would have been sincerely shocked by any comparison with them.

In any case, it is perhaps wrong to assume that any and every dictatorship, even a European-style fascist one, has necessarily to be anti-Semitic. Italian Fascism would not have turned against the Jews without Nazi pressure, and Franco Spain's record on the Jewish question is not at all bad. As for the Nazis and the Stalinist Communists, historical circumstances, as much as the type of government as such, explain their anti-Semitism. After all, the Nazis' use of the Jewish question was not an opportunistic device but the consequence of a deeply rooted German anti-Semitism which was made the main pillar of Nazi ideology. Similarly, Stalinist anti-Semitism is not an improvisation of Red totalitarianism, but is solidly steeped in Russian national traditions.

There exists no specific Latin American anti-Semitic ideology. This applies to the democratic as well as to the other countries. Latin American strong men either do without scapegoats or look for them abroad in "Yankee imperialism," "Wall Street," "Communism," or the foreign press. Dictators may have a tendency to despise weak minorities, but the Jews have recently stopped belonging to this category. Jewish terrorism against the British in Palestine and the subsequent feats of the Israeli army have aroused profound admiration in Latin America, especially in military circles. Furthermore, unlike Hitler, the Latin American dictator is satisfied if a citizen does not interfere with him, and he does not go out of his way to create enemies.

AND what about the Jewish attitude toward all this?

In countries with new and small Jewish communities that have not yet developed roots and still live in a certain isolation, Jews will often be grateful to a regime that treats them with fairness and compassion—all the more since as newcomers they will have had little contact with those who fight against that regime in the name of freedom and democracy. Thus in the Dominican Republic I found among Jews a certain naive lack of comprehension of the attacks on the Trujillo regime made abroad.

The situation is different in countries with larger and older Jewish communities, where Jews participate in life at large and have closer relations with Gentile neighbors. In spite of all Perón's wooing, Argentinian Jew-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ry is certainly not for him, as the last elections have proven. They might consider his benevolence towards them a redeeming feature, and have no complaints as Jews, but as Argentinian citizens they think back nostalgically to the days of freedom.

But the Jews of Argentina are not so foolish as to believe that the overthrow of Perón would usher in paradise. For it is hardly conceivable that his overthrow would be achieved by democratic forces; it is more likely that it would be the work of the extreme nationalist elements in the army and of the Nazi-like Alianza Nacionalista. This possibility probably accounts for the rather passive role of Argentina's Jewry at the present time.

The Jewish question is, of course, only one of the problems a Jewish citizen faces. Perhaps he feels that a certain amount of "physiological" or "instinctive" anti-Semitism is more natural and safer than the artificial suppression of anti-Semitism by dictatorial decree. In the final analysis, I think the Uruguayan Jew lives with more peace of mind than his Argentinian neighbor.

However, despotism is still despotism, with or without discrimination against Jews. Nazism would still have been despicable even if it had not touched the hair of a single Jew. We have argued that it is wrong to judge all Latin American dictators by the same standards and to condemn them wholesale. At the same time, to look at Latin America's political tragedy only through the perspective of the attitude different regimes take toward the Jew would place us in the ridiculous position of the student in the famous story about the elephant and the Jewish problem. A partisan of democracy can only view with sadness its present plight in so many of the countries of Latin America. Whatever relief he may feel at the fact that Jews, who have suffered all over the world and under all pretexts, are not the victims this time, the sadness remains.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ILLUSIONS OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

The Moral Question and the Secularists

ROBERT E. FITCH

IT WAS the good fortune of this American republic that its founders were members of an intelligentsia. It was also the good fortune of that intelligentsia that its members were men of affairs, who held responsibilities as statesmen, businessmen, lawyers, farmers, and churchmen. Since then things have changed. The American intelligentsia has become a separate class—of writers, teachers, scholars, clergymen, scientists, and artists. This class was restored to political influence as the Brain Trust under the New Deal. Apparently its leadership was repudiated in the "revolt against the eggheads" in the presidential election of 1952.

If at this moment I choose to write about the illusions of the intelligentsia rather than about their positive skills and their true visions, it is because it would seem that the time has come for critical self-examination. Speaking as one who is a member of the class under consideration, I must insist on the importance and on the rightness of this criticism. It is no fairer to say that a critic of the intelligentsia must be a fascist than to say that a critic of the government must be a Communist. Fascism, like Communism, is not peculiarly an attack upon the intelligentsia, any more than it is an attack upon free enterprise in business, or upon the independence of labor unions, or upon the autonomy of the family or of the church or of science or of the arts. Moreover, the historical record does not suggest that the members of the intelligentsia have distinguished themselves above the members of other classes in the resistance either to fascism or to Communism.

THE illusions to be considered are four in number, and may be labeled and defined as follows. There is the illusion of the elite—that this class is especially fitted to rule. There is the illusion of monopoly—that this class has a monopoly of the wisdom which is its professional concern. There is the liberal illusion—that in a world where all things are relative man is free to choose any thinkable abstraction and to make his own values *de novo*. There is the civilized illusion—that religious faith is an unnecessary support to moral ideals.

The first two of these illusions are generic in character. They may be found in any class. There is probably no class in history that has not had messianic delusions of grandeur concerning its special fitness to govern. There is no class that does not tend to believe, too, that it must have a monopoly of the particular value in which it specializes.

For instance, from the end of the Civil War until 1932, the American businessman

---

CALL it "the purge of eggheads" or the "tide of anti-intellectualism," or what you will, there is no denying that the intelligentsia as a class has suffered a considerable decline in public esteem since its dizzying rise of the 30's and 40's. Many members of the class have reacted to this with cries of outrage, and certainly many of the attacks have come from dubious sources and been dubiously motivated. But there has also been considerable soul-searching, to which process this essay in self-criticism by ROBERT E. FITCH will, we believe, make a genuinely clarifying contribution. Certainly, few are likely to deny that the issues he raises are real and basic, whether we accept the direction of his answers or not. Dr. Fitch was born in Ningpo, China, in 1902. He received his A.B. at Yale, his B.D. at Union Theological Seminary and his doctorate (in 1935) at Columbia University. He is at present dean of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, and professor of Christian Ethics there. Dr. Fitch is the author of several books, including *The Kingdom Without End* (1950).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was able to persuade not only himself but the rest of the country that his class was most fit to rule. Furthermore, he had a quite natural conviction that, whatever might be the other virtues and vices of his class, it must have a monopoly of business brains. But by 1932 neither of these illusions could stand. The American public decided that the businessman was no longer fit to rule—either directly or indirectly—and gave the power of government to a combination of other classes. Worse than that, the public became convinced that the businessman did not have even business brains, and so proceeded to turn over a large portion of business to the state.

The third and fourth illusions I have listed are quite different in character. They, too, are not the property of any one class, but they gain a peculiar intensity among the intelligentsia. Certainly there is room here for disagreement and for debate. Some people will deny the prevalence of these illusions. Others will assert that these are not illusions at all; that on the contrary they are just honest statements of fact. I have no desire to coerce the convictions of anyone; but let us see what persuasiveness there is in the argument.

THE ILLUSION OF THE ELITE. The belief that persons of intelligence and of wisdom are the most fit to govern is as old as Plato and Confucius, as modern as Voltaire and the Encyclopedists, and as recent and contemporary as the hero worship of Adlai Stevenson. Its formula is essentially that of the enlightened, benevolent despot. Nor does it really surrender the formula in the context of democracy, except to convert the despot into a sort of political prima donna of the people. Perhaps Nehru in India today comes closest to approximating the ideal at its best.

One finds a current elaboration of the formula in an article by Gerald W. Johnson in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1952-53). In the course of an elegiac essay on Governor Stevenson, Mr Johnson tells us that, apart from luck, there are three qualifications for the successful President. The first is a matter of histrionic talent—"a genius for interpretation." The second is a "thorough comprehension of the operations of the mediocre mind." The third is a "well-nigh limitless intellectual agility."

The first talent, one notes, is the talent of the expert in public relations. Concerning the second qualification, let us remark how it combines both the vanity and the snobbery of the intellectual. Is it, indeed, the case that the mind of the American people is a "mediocre mind"? And if it be such, does the leader in a democracy comprehend that mind with his intellect? Does he not, rather, intuitively apprehend it, partly through frequent and intimate association with it, and partly because there is in his own mind some healthy element of vulgarity? As for the third trait, I can only say that among the successful leaders in church, or in state, or in business that I have been able to observe there has been in evidence plenty of agility, but I have never been able to persuade myself that the agility was essentially intellectual.

Whomever Mr. Johnson is describing in his ideal President—it appears to be Adlai Stevenson and it might be Franklin D. Roosevelt—it is certain that he is not describing the President of whom he speaks most fondly in his essay—George Washington. By any of the criteria of the intelligentsia George Washington would never have held a position of leadership. There has been some convincing argument recently that Washington was unskilled as a military strategist, that he was guilty of stupidities as a commander in the field. It is maintained, with a show of evidence, that the really talented fighting man was the brilliant but unappreciated Benedict Arnold. All of this may be true. There was only one thing wrong with Benedict Arnold: he was a traitor.

And suppose that the first President of the United States had been selected primarily for his intelligence and his wisdom. One can believe that just about any other candidate might have received the honor—a Jeffer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

son, an Adams, a Madison, a Hamilton—anyone but George Washington. The father of this nation was not first among the minds of his people. He was first in the hearts of his countrymen.

Let us ask the key question: what are the talents of the chief executive in a democracy? Some measure of intelligence and of wisdom, to be sure. But also, strength of character, the ability to evoke trust and to instil confidence, the ability to keep poise under pressure, the capacity for good judgment that must often be swift and intuitive, the knack for surrounding oneself with other men of talent and for making them pull together as a team, a genius for foresighted action in accord with democratic principles, an executive genius.

The members of an intelligentsia may have the wisdom; they may even have the strength of character. It is rare that they have the other qualities. As a rule the saint or the sage is no executive. As a rule—except for an occasional Lincoln or Gandhi—the good executive is neither saint nor sage.

THE ILLUSION OF MONOPOLY. I have suggested that the intelligentsia may be deficient in prudence and skill in practical affairs. But surely they must have wisdom, a knowledge and a love of the supreme values of life. If the doctor has a monopoly on medical skills, the engineer a monopoly on mechanical skills, the businessman a monopply on business skills, then it is only reasonable that the intelligentsia should have a monopoly on the wisdom which is the specialty of their craft.

Most of the time this is no illusion. Or it is only a partial illusion, to the extent that one thinks that the wisdom or the skills cannot be shared at all by those outside the ranks of the professionals. But at a time of social revolution, it becomes an illusion. It even becomes a radical falsehood. At such a time wisdom is taken away from the wise and given to others.

The issue has its classical illustration in the challenge of Christianity to Hellenistic culture. It was the philosophers of Greece and of Rome who were possessed of the official wisdom. Saint Paul was so conscious of the conflict that, in contrast to this wisdom, he chose deliberately to speak of the foolishness of his faith. Certainly the Hellenistic thinkers had a genius of intellect and of style way beyond that of any of the Church Fathers. Yet the critical question for the social historian remains: where did the true wisdom reside? Was it in the fading wisdom of Greece and of Rome, or in the insurgent foolishness of the Christian faith? Is it possible that in this context only the fools were the truly wise? Whatever one thinks absolutely of the merits of the case, the gross pragmatic judgment of history is clear.

The issue is illustrated again in the French Revolution. The French intelligentsia of the Age of Reason were not radicals. Voltaire and the Encyclopedists were still flirting with the ideal of the enlightened, benevolent despot. The truly revolutionary figures of the 18th century—a John Wesley in England and a Rousseau in France—were both of them outcast from the official enlightenment of the times. Yet it was the foolishness of a Wesley and of a Rousseau that contained the vital ferment for the new wisdom that was brewing.

The rise of Communism is another instance of the same thing. Karl Marx was numbered among the fools in the 19th century. It was not until the 20th, after his prophecies had reached both fulfillment and failure, that it became respectable among the intelligentsia to discuss dialectical materialism. In both the Russian and the Chinese revolutions there was a Menshevik phase—longer in China—when the intelligentsia could participate happily in social change. But when the radical doctrine of the Bolsheviks finally triumphed, the wisdom of the wise in Russia proved to be as vain and irrelevant as did the Confucian wisdom of the mandarin in China.

If we do not find the same phenomenon in the American Revolution, that is because our revolution was not a social revolution. Indeed, it was primarily a ratification of what had long been the status quo in this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

country. The significant social revolution had been initiated in the 17th century and, by the time we were ready to assert our independence, John Locke's theory of the revolution was almost a hundred years old, and respectable. Burke was consistent in his conservatism when he denounced the French Revolution and applauded ours. In our case the intelligentsia were simply making explicit an established wisdom.

What all this amounts to—apart from the special instance in our own history—is that the intelligentsia can suffer from a hardening of the categories of their wisdom. At this point the intelligentsia cease to be the intelligent. It is not a question of whether we are favorably impressed by the revolutions cited—Christian, or Communist, or French republican. The fact remains that in each instance the intelligentsia failed to cope with the problem in all its seriousness. When this class fails, men will turn from intelligence to blood and iron and terror, or to faith and hope and love—and out of these things they will fashion a new wisdom. But their turning away from intelligence is because the wisdom of the wise has become folly.

THE LIBERAL ILLUSION. This is the illusion that everything in this world is relative, so that man is free to choose and to create his own values as he will. It may be called the liberal illusion only in a special, etymological sense of the word liberal, for the historic liberals of the 18th century entertained no such illusion.

The evolution of this illusion can be traced in three stages, through three centuries, as focused on three men of science. In the 18th century—under the influence of Newtonian mechanics—Christians, deists, and atheists found inevitable the belief in an objective, universal moral law. In the 19th century, under the influence of Darwin and evolution, the moral law appeared to support free competition and the survival of the fittest, and began to take on the character of an immoral law. By the 20th century, under the aegis but not under the authority of Einstein, the principle of relativity became the new absolute, and was applied to all values, moral, political, aesthetic, even logical and mathematical.

The critical impact on our thinking came from the science of anthropology. There is a straight line from William Graham Sumner's *Folkways* to Ruth Benedict's widely read *Patterns of Culture,* and, whether explicitly or by indirection, its teaching is that all values are relative to the mores. One finds the same notion in Justice Holmes's correspondence with Harold Laski. It was written into a decision of the Supreme Court by Chief Justice Vinson. Innumerable treatises in aesthetics, in ethics, and in the social sciences take this dogma for granted. And even in that branch of neo-orthodox theology which is most influential among American Protestants today, while there is an insistence upon the categorical character of God's command, there is the repudiation of any natural moral law to be discerned by the mind of man.

Of course within the context of loyalty to American traditions and American values, an ultimate relativism need not exclude a critical and creative attention to the things that we have cared for in this country. One thinks of the historical studies and of the analyses of current events by writers like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Sidney Hook, or James Burnham. I simply raise the question—and I do not know what would be the answer of any of these men: are the values that they cherish merely American values, or are they rooted in some universal and objective order of values? Because if they are merely American values and not universally human values, then the best defense of them is nothing more than an enlightened nationalism.

Whether it is an illusion, or a correct report of the facts, that all moral values are relative to changing cultures, everyone is obliged to face the consequences of entertaining such a belief. I see only two sets of consequences in the record. One is the practice of a soft relativism: let us learn to tolerate all differences, let us live and let live. This is the luxurious relativism of a pros-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perous and comfortable society where there is room for everyone. The other is the practice of a tough relativism which knows there are too many lives, and that there is not enough for all to live on, so that the strong must take away from the weak.

When circumstances press hard enough the soft relativist becomes a tough relativist, or else he becomes extinct. The logic of the movement from one extreme to the other is illustrated in the career of a Jean-Paul Sartre. In his early Existentialist phase he was a soft relativist, although already a desperate and disillusioned one. In his present Communist phase, he has simply turned to the toughest of all tough relativisms in the modern world.

But either under a soft or under a tough relativism it is clear that there can be no sanctuary for the values of a genuine intelligentsia. Truth, beauty, wisdom, justice, liberty: there is no reason why we should respect these things. Nor is there any device, ultimately, by which we can distinguish them from falsehood, ugliness, folly, injustice, and slavery. And if the members of an intelligentsia disclaim any service to these higher values, there is no reason why we should respect them either.

This does not mean that these values can be the monopoly of some class or institution: that is a sure way to suffocate them. Nor does it mean that these values should be enforced by coercion: that is a sure way to destroy them. But we may believe with Thomas Jefferson that such values, as more than mere human inventions, are rooted in nature, or in nature's God, so that the minds of free men may come upon them and learn to cherish and to enlarge them.

THE CIVILIZED ILLUSION. This is the illusion that religion is pure superstition; that, far from being the carrier of the great values of mankind, it is mere superfluous baggage which impedes rather than helps us on the march.

If I venture to call it the civilized illusion, this is because I am thinking of a brilliant passage in Susanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* where she describes how an urban, industrialized culture may separate man from the springs of a natural piety. I should say—although Mrs. Langer would not—that the separation from nature is only one step this side of the separation from God. The civilized illusion, let us say more simply, is a preoccupation with the fruits of life with an accompanying contempt for its roots.

It would be impossible to document the prevalence of this illusion among the intelligentsia. One finds only symptoms of it here and there: in the tone of a book, in the temper of discussion in a learned society, in the way a Harry Allen Overstreet takes over the moral values of Christianity but omits the religious faith, in the curious manner in which an Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., goes out of his way in a friendly review of *The Irony of American History* to inveigh against something he calls "compulsory godliness," in Lewis Mumford's apparent appropriation and paraphrasing of Reinhold Niebuhr's doctrine of man with the careful exclusion of Niebuhr's theology, in the tremendous furor in the press over Whittaker Chambers' suggestion that the question of Communism is finally a question of religious convictions. If these are just isolated symptoms and prove nothing, then well and good. But if they reflect a pervasive condition, then the issue is joined.

Historically the important fact is that the great values of democracy have arisen and flourished chiefly within the context of the Hebrew-Christian-Protestant faith. This fact points to countries like Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States, where a specific religious tradition was both the antecedent and the nurse of democratic values. There are, of course, scandalous exceptions—like the connection between German Lutheranism and the Nazi movement, and the present tie-up between Dutch Calvinism and rabid racialism in South Africa. It is demonstrable, however, that both of these instances are in contradiction to the preponderant impact of Lutheranism and of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Calvinism over the rest of the world. In any case, the great *stable* democracies—unlike the *un*stable, anti-clerical democracies—have this religious foundation.

The ideological ingredients of this fact are threefold. There are three beliefs which underlie any viable democratic culture. Let us state them in the order of their chronological emergence. First there is the Hebrew prophetic passion for social justice—which, unlike Greek, or Hindu, or Chinese concepts of justice, is radically egalitarian and humanitarian in tendency. Next there is the New Testament concept of the sanctity of the individual person as a child of God and as a sinner for whom Christ died—a more drastic notion of the preciousness of personality than anything found in rationalism or in romanticism. Finally, there is a peculiarly Protestant development of the various liberties—personal, political, civil, and economic—liberties which are secular in function, but which rest on the foundation of the spiritual freedom celebrated by a Saint Paul or a Martin Luther. If these values are arranged schematically rather than chronologically, then the sacredness of the person lies at the center, and liberty and justice are its two chief implementations.

The crux of the issue is whether or not these values can be fostered and creatively furthered without the foundation of religious faith. The humanist maintains that this is quite possible, and presently desirable. It is not within the compass of this essay to provide proof one way or the other. However, by any calculus of probabilities based on historical evidence, the humanist must be at more of a disadvantage than the theist in establishing his case. If there is any point of agreement among assorted distinguished philosophers of history—Augustine, Hegel, Marx, Spengler, Toynbee—it is that the values of any culture are tied into the total cultural *Gestalt*, and that, when the religious and metaphysical foundations are ripped out, the values perish also.

Let me confess, finally, that in this whole discussion I have a selfish interest. That is, I am selfish for the interests of the class of the intelligentsia to which professionally I belong. Others of my colleagues may be concerned chiefly with the ruthless violence with which we are attacked. I am concerned more with our own frailty and futility in the fight.

For it seems that we are weak and divided. We spend more energy in berating one another than in standing together against a common foe. At one extreme we exhibit arrogance, intolerance, and self-righteousness. At the other extreme—and in greater numbers, I fear—we show ourselves to be cowardly, complacent, and eager desperately to hang onto the small comforts of life at whatever cost to the ideals we should cherish. In either case we bring ourselves into contempt before men.

But no man fights without faith. Least of all the intelligent man. If that faith were great enough, it might endow us with sufficient humility to know that there are others elect besides ourselves, to know that the wisdom of which we wish to be the guardians is no private possession of our own. It might also give us that courage in the fight which is born of the great conviction that the liberty and the justice and the truth whose banners we fly are written into the very laws of nature and are part of the eternal decree of its Creator.

This does not mean that triumph is always sure. If, indeed, the times are out of joint and freedom must fail for a while, then we should be able, like Socrates, to drink the hemlock with dignity, and in the confidence that there is a more terrible judge than death. But if the prospect is still hopeful—and I am convinced that it is—let us strike out like Voltaire to crush the infamous thing, wherever its infamy may lie, like warriors of a king before whom even the most infamous thing must yield to a greater power and glory.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A FAMILY MAN

A Story

DAN JACOBSON

I DID not realize how much Tel Aviv had worn me down after three weeks of unemployment and loneliness until one night I sat in a cinema watching *Beau Geste*. I found the drama most moving, and when Gary Cooper died in a fortress in the desert, I began to weep quietly to myself. I suppose I felt I knew what it was like.

A city where one knows nobody and in which one has no work is, I think, as desolate a place as any on earth. I had no friends in Tel Aviv; I knew almost no Hebrew; and there were very few friends of mine in all Israel. I went to visit one in Jerusalem, and he wasn't there, so I came back to Tel Aviv. I visited another in a kibbutz in the north, and found that we no longer had anything to say to one another, and that I did not like the kibbutz, so I came back to Tel Aviv again. I had a letter of introduction to someone in the Israeli Foreign Office, and spent a morning wandering around the hutments outside Tel Aviv where the government was at that time housed. I followed one erroneous direction after another, and went from one wooden hut to the next. Eventually I sat under a tree and watched a procession of unemployed Yemenites who were as lost as I was, and were bemusedly trailing around the encampment in search of the man they had come to make demonstrations against. I hope they found him: I was told by a girl in a khaki skirt that my man had gone to Ottawa for a conference.

DAN JACOBSON was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1929, and now lives in Kimberley, where he is in the stock feed business. He spent some time in Israel as an agricultural worker in a kibbutz. We have published a number of his short stories and an article. Mr. Jacobson is at work on a novel.

Tel Aviv was appallingly ugly, white, and crowded. I lived in a succession of hotel rooms which I shared with a succession of people as itinerant as myself; I never unpacked my clothes, nor did any of the others. Sometimes it seemed to me that half of Tel Aviv was living as I was, and the reflection was not a cheering one. I saw some of the people with whom I shared rooms: we said "Shalom" to each other and fell asleep: the sabra with a vicious cast in his eye; an old German Jew who talked to himself, awake or asleep; an Australian who told me lies about the air force in which he claimed he was a pilot. Others I did not even see. They were no more than the electric light coming on, clothes being thrown on a chair, a cough, a smell of socks. It was as though I were living for weeks in a crowded train compartment, only that when I woke the scenery hadn't changed at all. I wandered around the streets until my feet ached; I sat on a bench and stared at the feeble sea they have there; I watched the children play in the Gan Meier; I asked myself again and again what exactly I had hoped to do by coming to Israel without a job and with not too much money. I couldn't even leave the country. Apart from other considerations, there was nowhere for me to go, except home, and that would have been an ignominy greater than I could face. So I applied for a job as an English teacher at a commercial school of some sort, and they kept me hanging around for days, and then gave the job to someone else.

THE night I saw Gary Cooper die in the desert, I went into a billiard saloon on my way back to the room. I wanted someone to talk to me, and a billiard saloon seemed the most likely place where that would hap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pen. It did not of course. A few soldiers were playing snooker, and a group of Moroccan youths were batting away at table tennis with a ferocity that left no room for chitter-chatter with an Anglo-Saxon in a corner. So I went out of the billiard room feeling worse than ever. I flinched from the thought of the room, but at least there I could lie down.

There was a surprise waiting for me in the room: a portrait of a little boy was pinned up with thumbtacks on one of the doors of the wardrobe which no one ever used. The portrait had a green background, and was painted on linen. I tried the door of the wardrobe but it was locked. Apparently someone had taken up residence in the room.

That was something to think about. I lay on my bed and smoked, staring at the portrait. It was a very bad portrait; the boy's mouth hung open in a smile that I tired of quickly. He had blond hair bristling all around his head into the green background. And his eyes seemed screwed up, though that may only have been a fold in the linen. When I had exhausted the picture's interest I tried to read, but the one yellow bulb in the room seem to attract rather than disperse the shadows of the evening, and I put the book down again. Charlotte Bronte couldn't hold my attention anyway. A man came in, said "Shalom," and went out again, after putting a knapsack under the bed that was to be his. I looked at the knapsack. I knew what it contained: I had seen enough of them under other beds.

Then the door opened and a small man in a brown suit with faint white stripes stood in the doorway. He didn't rush in as the other had done; he stood and looked around him: this was to be his room. "Shalom," he said.

"Shalom," I replied.

Then I noticed how bald he was. It would have been better if he had been absolutely bald, but, as if to show up the baldness of the rest of his skull, he had a roll of fine brown hair on either side of his head. The hair curved back on itself, in each roll. The rest was bald, wrinkled, brown, with faint freckles here and there on his scalp.

He smiled at me and I smiled at him.

"You speak Hebrew?" he asked me.

"No."

"Yiddish?"

"A little."

"Where do you come from?"

"South Africa."

He opened his hands and closed them with a little clap. "We will speak English," he said, and only then did he come into the room. "We will talk English."

He went to one of the other beds and sat down on it. He was very short, and his neat polished shoes did not rest fully on the floor; they dangled a little, childishly.

He sat on the bed and looked at me, smiling. Apparently he expected me to entertain him. It did not seem that it would be difficult to do so: he looked like an innocent, a well-wisher, in that room—the guiltless party in a divorce perhaps.

I said: "It's been very hot today."

"So hot. Terrible heat." He nodded agreement enthusiastically.

Then he waited for more.

"It'll be hot until the rains come," I suggested.

"So," he agreed. "Terrible heat until the rains come." That was settled.

I wondered what I could do next. I offered him a cigarette, and he took one, and we lit our cigarettes from a lighter which he produced deftly, from one pocket of his trousers, and put away again like a conjurer.

We blew smoke. Still he regarded me, smiling, and I began to smile too. My smile widened. I began to laugh, and delightedly bringing both hands to his ears and throwing them into his lap, he laughed too.

HE REALLY was an extraordinary-looking person. Beneath that bald scalp, with all that bone uncovered, his face sagged suddenly with an excess of flesh and loose skin. It sagged downwards, past his eyes, and billowed into round cheeks, a heavy jaw, a thick neck that rose at a shallow angle to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meet the round of his chin. The downward droop from the skull was like that of a half-filled sack of meal. The sack was marked with a small nose, a mouth, and indecisive wrinkles here along the cheek, there to the side of the mouth. And then face and neck, the burgeoning man, dwindled away, again quite suddenly, to a spruce little body, a neat little stomach, little legs dangling. He laughed at me, and I laughed at him, and we were glad we were together.

"Where do you come from?" I asked.

"From Hungary. Then there was a war, and I was in Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy. Now I am in Eretz Israel."

"How do you like it here?"

"It is difficult. I am a chef here—" and he pointed with a precise finger at the corner of the room. Then he named a café near the Dizengoff Circle: the direction was the right one. "It is not easy work. My feet are exhausted when I stand all day cooking in the kitchen."

"What were you before the war?"

"I was in business. What else should I have done?"

I couldn't answer that one. "Have you been here long?" I asked.

"Three weeks."

"Three weeks! That's the same as me."

The coincidence pleased him. He saluted me. "We are both sabras."

"Sabras who can't speak Hebrew."

"That is nothing. You will learn to speak Hebrew."

"Do you speak Hebrew at all?"

"A little, yes. I learned in Switzerland and Italy, but it is not easy always to learn a new language. German, French, Italian, English, now Hebrew. Always new languages."

"No, I don't suppose it is easy."

"We are not very good sabras," the man admitted. "But my son will be a sabra." He pointed at the picture on the wardrobe, and I looked at the open mouth, the blonde spikes of hair against a green background.

"Where is your son?"

"He is in Switzerland." He brought his hands to his chest and crossed them there for a moment, one flat palm lying above the other—an archaic, gentle gesture, like one preparing himself for prayer. "He has the T.B.'s," he explained. "But one day he will be better."

"I hope so," I said.

He looked at the picture and shook his head. "He is a clever boy. Already he writes to me in Hebrew, because that is what they are teaching him in the hospital. There is a waiter at the café who tells me what he is saying in German. I write to him in German, and he understands that also." The boy's face hung in the room, painted on a sheet of linen. The room in which he hung had five iron bedsteads, a floor of bare pale tiles, the one sickly bulb hanging unshaded from a piece of electric flex.

"Does he look like that?" I asked.

"He is bigger now, but I think he still looks like that. I have not seen him for a year. When I went to Italy I left him in the hospital for the T.B.'s, and then I could not go back to him. Now I wait for him here."

"When do you expect him to come?"

"They say it will be a long time."

His face was in repose: I saw that he had rather dark blue eyes.

"You have eaten?" he asked me.

"Yes."

"You will eat some here?"

"Where?"

"Here," he repeated, and went to the wardrobe. He took the key from his back pocket, again with a flick, a twist, and opened the wardrobe. His clothing was hung up within it: there was another brown suit, and two pairs of highly polished shoes on the floor of the wardrobe. Next to the shoes was a paper packet. He took this out and put it on the table. "I always have food now. It is because of my work." And he showed me a tin of bully beef, a packet of biscuits, a small bottle of olive oil. He held them to me, one after the other, in one hand, tempting me. "You don't want?"

"No, thank you."

He looked at the food thoughtfully, and then produced a packet of sandwiches from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his jacket, which he put together with the others in a little display. He regarded the four items for a moment, before quickly wrapping them up again. "Tomorrow morning there will be sandwiches." He put the parcel on the floor of the wardrobe and locked it.

"We will go now for a walk."

So the two of us went for a walk. We walked along the sea front, past all the hideous cafés screaming gramophone music across the Mediterranean, the soldiers, the young girls who looked like soldiers, the young sabra men in white shirts shouting at one another in their throaty Hebrew, as though swearing at each other, but really, as I was to discover when I knew the language a little better, only saying things like "Nice to see you" and "How you doing Aaron." The sea made no noise, and there was no wind. Upstairs one café they were dancing, and a crowd stood below watching them dance, as I had stood the previous evening. But at least tonight I was with a friend. We walked on. He walked with quick steps, small and on his toes, and stepped aside continually to let others pass. We would be separated, and I would see him dancing his sidestep, smiling at me, trying to join me through the crowd. There was a swanky hotel, with people sitting on a balcony watching the sea; here was a crowded little park, and a gang of girls rushed past in their best dress uniform of white blouse and blue skirt. Cars were grinding about in the empty lot used as an army car park, and soldiers in the soldiers' club were wailing some kind of song; droves of them stood outside, feverishly begging lifts from cars.

We turned and went back to the hotel. There were too many strangers: no one had greeted us.

I was ready for bed, and when we got to the room I took my clothes off and crawled between the blankets. I knew I would have to throw the blankets off after a few minutes: it was too hot even to wear pajamas. But the man with me did nothing as unceremonious as that. Firstly, he went to the bathroom, and I heard the flush of the pan drumming against the wall where my bed stood. Then he gargled his throat: I heard that down the passage. Then I heard him running the water and puffing and blowing. He came into the room carrying his collar and tie in his hand. His eyes were screwed up, and what hair he had stood up from his head in wet bristles, giving him a freak resemblance to the picture of the round-faced, smiling boy pinned to the wardrobe door. He stood in front of the wardrobe and groped to get it open, but he had forgotten that it was locked and that the key was in his pocket. When he remembered he did not know what to do, because he did not want to put his wet hand in his pocket. I got out of bed and gave him a towel from the top of my case. He received it gratefully.

"Ah," he exclaimed, rubbing himself fiercely. "Ah." He puffed; his neck wobbled under the scrubbing. "Ah. That is finished." He returned the towel to me.

Then he proceeded to undress. He took off his shoes and socks, and polished each shoe with its respective sock, put the socks within the shoes, and placed them so that they peeped out, shining, from under the bed. He took off his shirt and folded it under his pillow, for some reason. He took off his trousers and folded them, put his collar and tie on top, and then settled the parcel in the middle of the table. He went to the wardrobe, took his pajamas out, unfolded them and stared at them for some time, holding them full-length away from him; apparently he found them satisfactory, for he whipped off his vest and underpants and jumped into the pajamas. Then he stood in the middle of the room and smiled at me. The pajamas had red and yellow stripes of equal width. They reminded me of something—something seen on a cinema screen—but of what I only remembered later. He said to me: "Is good?"

It was only courtesy to reply: "Is good."

Then he got into bed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The problem then became—who was to switch off the light? I was too lazy to get out of bed, and waited for him. But he didn't seem to mind having the light on. He lay under his blanket with his arms behind his head, staring up.

I asked him: "Do you want the light off?"

"It can stay like this." Then he asked me: "You are Jewish?"

"Yes."

"Everybody here is Jewish. It is good."

"Yes," I said.

But we neither of us had much conviction. He was working himself up a little about it; I couldn't blame him; I had tried myself.

THEN he sat up in bed and cried out to me: "One, my wife. Two, my daughter Elise. Three, my daughter Riva." He was counting them off on his fingers. His gestures were as neat as ever: the forefinger came down to meet the precisely protruded fingers of the other hand, one after the other. "Four, my father. Five, my mother." The fingers of that hand were exhausted. He counted back on the other. "Six, my brother. Seven, my sister. *Tot,*" he shouted in German at me. "*Tot. Tot.* The little boy is the only one left. My brother's children. My sister's children. *Tot.*" He asked me: "You know what that is—*tot*?"

"Yes," I said.

"I was in Buchenwald. You have heard of Buchenwald?"

"Yes."

"That was where they killed my wife and the girls. I don't know where they killed the others."

He sat up in bed in his striped pajamas, with the two rolls of hair curving back on themselves again as they dried, and the sad sack of a face beneath, his body in a Buddhist posture, his hands in his lap. He said: "They can't do that to us again," and it was strange to hear in his voice how weak the bulwarks of that faith were against not the past disasters, but the present loneliness, Tel Aviv and the hotel room, his job. He told me about his job. He hated it, and he did not know what to do, as he was afraid to let it go. He did not want to go into the country: he was too old to become a farmer. He did not have enough money to set up a business of his own. Now he was getting seventy lira a month. He asked me whether that was good.

I did not know. I thought it was quite good. I wasn't sure.

He told me that he wanted his son to learn a trade while he was in Switzerland, after he had recovered. Here, he could see, a carpenter, a bricklayer, was a king. "I will write to him," he said. "He must learn to be a carpenter in Switzerland."

When he decided to sleep he simply dived under his blanket. So in the end I had to get up and switch off the light.

I WAS wakened about two o'clock in the morning by the loudest and most obscene snoring I have ever heard in my life. It rose and fell like the crashing of waves; it was a roar, a yell, a bellow, the sound of the beast itself. I lay and suffered; I could not sleep with that noise in the room. I blocked my ears with my fingers, but it was impossible to lie in that position for long. I ducked my head under the cushion, but it hardly helped at all. All the day's loneliness and futility returned with the hour and the sound, and I felt desperately sorry for myself, helpless, unable to sleep. I whispered, "Shut up, shut up, shut up," willing the man to silence with every snore he gave, but it did not help. I lifted myself from the bed to see who it was. It was not my friend; it was the other man who had come in and out so quickly, and had now returned to shatter the night. The room seemed to rock with the sound of the snores. I said loudly into the darkness: "Shut up," and all the stranger did was snort, and then begin to snore again. I wanted to kill him.

I was not the only one. The little man across the room leaped out of bed. He pranced across the room in his pajamas, and leaned over the bed of the snorer, solicitously, it seemed. He brought his lips to the ear of the snorer, like someone about to whisper secrets, or a lover. He remained like that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for a moment, while the snorer's body heaved and fell. Then he gathered himself together and flung all his strength into a most terrible yell right in the snorer's ear. *"Bleib still! Du schnarchst wie ein Schwein!"*

I was momentarily struck with terror by the loudness of it, the high yelling timbre of the voice in a dark room in the middle of the night. But when I felt my heart beginning to beat again, I gave a low cheer. And the little man came across to me, delightedly shook my hand, and scampered back to bed.

There had been a gasp from the snorer, and then silence so intense I was afraid that he had fainted. I got out of bed and went and leaned over the man's bed. In the darkness I saw only the shine of a terrified pair of eyes staring up at me. The man did not move—either he could not, or he thought it wiser not to. He stared at me in silence, eyes wide open.

From the other bed I heard my friend sigh as he fell back into sleep, a sound of contented, half-conscious surrender. The rigid creature beneath me did not move. I went back to bed and slept, undisturbed by any snores.

When I woke the next morning both of the others had already left the room. I decided suddenly that I would go from Tel Aviv, that day. I would go back to Jerusalem, and see if I could do anything there—I could at least speak to someone in the Agency who might be able to advise me. But before I left, the hotel proprietor had a long talk with me: what had happened in my room the previous night? One of the people from the room had come downstairs and told him that the other people in the room had tried to murder him in the middle of the night. I denied any knowledge of it. I said the man was mad. Then the hotel proprietor said that something must have happened. He had asked the second man in the room if anything had happened, and this man had said no, nothing had happened to talk about. "We killed a pig, that's all that happened," the proprietor quoted. What did the man mean: "We killed a pig"? I said I did not know. But I thought of the gesture my friend must have made in telling his story to the proprietor, the flick of his wrist, and all his fingers flaring outwards, the neat gesture of an innocent, a practical joker, a father, a widower.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

A PULPIT IN THE SOUTH

"Mixing": Variations on a Dominant Theme

HARRY L. GOLDEN

IT HAD been an ordeal for both Rabbi Geller and Mr. Morris Witcoff, president of Temple Emanu-El, "The Jewish Reform Congregation of Elizabeth, North Carolina." Thirty-year-old Nathan Geller had occupied this Southern pulpit for two years, coming directly from the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati, only stopping off at New York to see his parents and marry a young German emigree whose parents had escaped the Nazis in 1939. Now his two-year contract was drawing to a close, and it had been Mr. Witcoff's painful duty to notify him officially that the trustees would not renew. The rabbi decided to take a long walk before going home.

Well, it had not been entirely unexpected. At the beginning of the second year the trustees had sent him a memorandum clearly indicating that the rabbi had not lived up to their expectations. It included a point-by-point outline of what they felt they had a right to expect of the rabbi in the ensuing year. When he met with the trustees in full session a week before, Rabbi Geller had been aware that to their minds he had not sufficiently mended his ways. "Did I build up a good Sunday school?" he asked them categorically. The answer was, yes, yes, Rabbi, we're proud of it. "How about my sermons?" Excellent, Rabbi. No one found fault with the sermons. "My conduct in the general community?" Fine, Rabbi, no criticism at all. "Then what's wrong?"

Mr. Witcoff himself spoke up for the board: "Rabbi, you're a good scholar, a good teacher, and your work with the children and the adult study group has been very good, but Rabbi, to be perfectly frank with you, what we really need here is a pastor and not a scholar."

Trustee Bleckman said: "Rabbi, here it is: we just cannot seem to get close to you. You do not mix enough. How many visits have you made to the members since you have been the rabbi here? We urged you last year to visit them regularly. But you never got around to it. You never made the rounds."

Trustee Rosenbaum interrupted: "Rabbi, out of twenty-two newcomers to Elizabeth since you have been the rabbi, the Conservatives got nineteen and we got three. There's something definitely wrong. You never seem to get a new member. You just do not mix enough."

The president of the Sisterhood, June Greenberg, spoke up: "Rabbi, no one finds fault with your teaching or scholarship, but at all our social functions you always arrive late and leave early, and no one seems able to get close to you at all. You just don't mix with the members enough."

HARRY L. GOLDEN, one of our valued correspondents from the South, tells here of the perils of the rabbinate in a no doubt imaginary (but not totally unrepresentative congregation) down Carolina way—and in the telling reveals something of the problems and paradoxes of "mixing," a matter that seems to bulk large in the consciousness of many a Jew below the Mason-Dixon line, as well as possibly elsewhere on the American scene. Mr. Golden is editor of the *Carolina Israelite* in Charlotte, N. C., and has written for the Charlotte *Observer* and the Charlotte *News*. He was born in New York City in 1902.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And so now Rabbi Geller was taking a long walk towards the Square. The Square was on the crest of a hill, where the buildings fell back and shrank away from a grove of elms and bricked walls. In the center of the Square was the statue of the Confederate general. From the temple office two miles away he could see the tip of the general's sword poised skyward. He had measured that walk several times. Usually by the time he reached the base of the monument he had been able to work out an entire sermon. On this walk, however, he was free to take his time and think his own thoughts. It was still several hours before supper time, and there was much to think about.

Pulling up stakes, packing his books, finding a temporary place to live in the North —but actually these were not the problems; not really. Sarah would take care of them all without a hitch; he wouldn't have to bother with a single detail. He smiled when he thought of his wife Sarah, six years younger than himself, but from the very start "managing director" in full charge of all their financial, household, and personal affairs. He suppressed a grin when he thought of what his friend Herman Gordon had said when he first met Sarah.

Gordon, a local newspaperman, considerably older than the rabbi, had been his good friend during the two years in Elizabeth. In the days of the New Deal Gordon had written many of the editorials for the local daily paper, but the publication had changed its policy in recent years and now he was writing book reviews mostly, contributing to the editorial page only when there was an eclipse of the moon or maybe when a Shakespeare troupe came to town. Gordon's previous contacts with the rabbis of the congregation—or for that matter with synagogue affairs generally—had never gone much beyond the handshake at the end of the Sabbath services. But as soon as Rabbi and Mrs. Geller had settled themselves in Elizabeth, Mr. Gordon was their very first social visitor. And he minced no words when he opened the door: "I hear a new rabbi has come to town who has a thousand books; I wonder if I may please see the books." Rabbi Geller and Mr. Gordon had then spent that entire first Sunday in Elizabeth uncrating the books, after which he had stayed for dinner and remained a close friend ever after. Not that his friendship had counted on the positive side of the ledger with the board. At the final meeting Trustee Bergstreet had said, "Rabbi, you've spent more time with Herman Gordon than with any other five members of the congregation, and what does Gordon give—the minimum, $75.00 a year." "And yes," chimed in Treasurer Shapiro, "he still owes for half of 1951 and hasn't paid anything on 1952 yet."

The rabbi was approaching the main crossing, where the avenue begins its upward climb toward the Square four more blocks away. What was it that Gordon had said when he met Sarah that first Sunday? Oh yes: "Rabbi, now that I've seen your wife, I advise you to resign and enter law school. A beautiful *rebbitzen* is suicide with the girls of the congregation. There's nothing the Sisterhood likes better than to work with a plain-looking *rebbitzen,* and if she's very plain, ah, she's wonderful. What a charming person, and so very, very accommodating. Rabbi, this will never do. Not in a million years."

The rabbi was halfway up the hill. He could see the forage cap in the left hand of the Confederate general dangling above the stirrup. He tried to dismiss from his mind all thoughts about moving, get down to more important thinking.

What of his future? What of the rabbinate? What, indeed, of the future of Jewish Reform? He remembered the inspiring discussions at Hebrew Union College. And he recalled also that during the first three months of his ministry two families had resigned from the temple. One resigned because the rabbi used "too much Hebrew" in his Friday evening service, and the second because he had refused to conduct the Orthodox "redemption-of-the-first-born" ritual (*pidyon ha-ben*). Yes, what of the future? Anticipating the decision of the trustees, his application for a new pulpit was already in the hands of the Placement Committee in Cincinnati—but what of that? When he attended the conference of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations earlier in the spring, the gossip was that the Placement Committee already had one hundred and fifty-five requests for new pulpits—nearly 40 per cent of the Reform rabbinate, and only April. By July 1, there was bound to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another fifty or sixty, at least; and during the previous five years there had been fifty-one pulpit changes in the South alone. Gordon had the answer: "Down South here, the temples are everlastingly in search of that one ideal rabbi of their dreams, the white, blue-eyed, blond, tall, Protestant rabbi, and they keep churning and churning the rabbis, trying to find him."

Geller winced, remembering something. It seems that the president of the Sisterhood had attended that same conference in April and she confided to another Sisterhood delegate that "Rabbi Geller would probably not be returning to Elizabeth next year"; three applications for the pulpit had beaten him home. The rabbi shuddered as he recalled a story almost forgotten. It concerned a brilliant young rabbi with an important pulpit in the Midwest who had been stricken with leukemia. Before his affliction had become known even in his congregation, a number of applications for the pulpit had arrived, on a "when, as, and if" basis—at least so the rumor had it. Mr. Gordon had no illusions as to his influence with the officers and directors of Temple Emanu-El; nevertheless, he had written a personal letter to each of the trustees asking them to renew the rabbi's contract. "This fellow actually believes in God," Gordon had written.

WHAT of old Rabbi Toback? Rabbi Julius Toback was sixty-three years old and the spiritual head of Temple Beth El in the neighboring town of Kenilworth, South Carolina. Rabbi Geller had discussed his problem with his senior as far back as a year ago, and the elderly rabbi had said: "Geller, you have to make up your mind to one thing. Elizabeth or elsewhere in the South, the pulpits are all the same. Believe me, they are all the same. If you want to stay in the rabbinate you have to accept that fact. There was a time when I had your ideas on what we called at the College, "Classical Reform," and that's why I am holding down the pulpit at Kenilworth, South Carolina, with a congregation of twenty-four families." Rabbi Toback continued with a smile: "And even at that, I'm not so sure of myself. To be quite frank, I am worried. You know I don't come in under the new Pension Plan, and I am beginning to hear rumblings among my twenty-four families. Some of them want me to take my cap off during services, but I don't know. I think I may be too old to do anything about it now." On another occasion Rabbi Toback had speculated that both their problems were part of the bigger problem—that half of each Reform congregation wants no more and no less than a Unitarian service, while the other half, from the "newer element," wants to cling to rituals and practices with which they became familiar in their youth.

Once Gordon had said, "Rabbi Geller, if I am to keep you as a friend here, you'll have to sell those thousand books and learn how to be a good master of ceremonies at the Sisterhood Brisket Supper." In a more serious vein, Gordon had continued: "Rabbi Toback here will bear me out, he's been all over the South." Rabbi Toback made a face. "Don't rub it in. I've had nine pulpits all my life, which isn't really so bad, that's seven years to a pulpit." "Except for one thing," Gordon said. "You became a rabbi when you were thirty years old, so it's an average of three and a half years a pulpit, not seven years." In any case, Mr. Gordon was right that night: "I'd like to tell you two rabbinical scholars something: I believe that the rabbi on the American scene has all but lost his traditional function. Today, entire American Jewry revolves around two pivots, combating anti-Semitism and fund-raising."

With that Gordon looked at Rabbi Geller and they both began to laugh. Rabbi Toback had held up his hand, "All right, all right, enough is enough, it's not funny any more." Gordon and Rabbi Geller both knew the story—it was a kind of wry joke at the expense of the old man. It seems that some months before at a big fund-raising dinner in Elizabeth, the committee had asked Rabbi Geller to give the invocation; and to lend more tone to the affair they decided to ask a second rabbi to give the benediction at the close of the proceedings, for which purpose they had invited Rabbi Toback from across the line in South Carolina. After Rabbi Geller's invocation came the dinner, and the program. The regional fund-raising director had decided that every "giver" of $1,000 and over should be entitled to "say a few words." In addition nine officers and committee chairmen were on the dais, all of whom were called upon during the course

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the evening. Old Rabbi Toback had sat through all this heroically, for five long hours. When, alas, his moment finally did come, the old gentleman was perforce in the men's room far away at the other end of the social hall, and "Dinty" Witcoff had been forced to call upon Rabbi Geller to give the closing prayer, too.

RABBI Geller read the inscription under the Rebel general:

DEDICATED TO THE MEN OF ELIZABETH WHO ANSWERED THE CALL OF DUTY, AND VALIANTLY LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR GOD AND THEIR BELOVED SOUTH.

He stopped to refresh himself at the water fountain. Dusk was beginning to settle and the general looked more majestic than ever hovering above the church spires of the Southern town. From here Rabbi Geller had watched his first parade in Elizabeth nearly two years before. It was the day after his first board meeting as rabbi of the congregation. He had had no part in the proceedings, and it was apparent from the discussion that the subject had been aired before. Trustee Geiger had asked for a vote on a motion which had been tabled two years earlier. The secretary read the original motion: *Resolved that the rabbi of this congregation, Temple Emanu-El of Elizabeth, North Carolina, wear suitable ritualistic headgear during all religious services.* "I move we refer it back to the Ritual Committee," said Trustee Josephson. But, interposed Trustee Geiger, the Ritual Committee had had the matter for two years without any action.

"Dinty" Witcoff, the president, then took over for what was clearly the majority opinion: "There we go again," he said. "If the rabbi wears a hat, what's the difference between us and the Conservative temple? We have an organ, they have an organ; we confirm the girls, they confirm the girls; now if the rabbi wears a hat, what's the difference, we'll practically be the same, and so why two temples, two budgets, and two rabbis?" This argument ended the discussion for another year at least. When Gordon heard of Witcoff's speech, he said that he was in complete accord, except that the president of the congregation had been guilty of a slight omission: two temples also means two presidents.

What made Rabbi Geller think of the argument about hats now was that he was standing on the same spot under the Confederate general from which he had seen that first parade in Elizabeth. Oh yes, it was early in September and the local citizens were observing General Stonewall Jackson Day, and it had been a colorful parade. Rabbi Geller remembered it well now. How could he forget? For in the second contingent of marchers, the leading figure up front was "Dinty" Witcoff, so vehement against "hats" the day before, but wearing a big red fez with gold tassels dangling down, and beating a drum.

IT WAS almost dark now, and the rabbi had hardly noticed that the dozen or more shouting and scampering children had suddenly disappeared. He refreshed himself again at the water fountain and sat down on a bench overlooking the main thoroughfare with its brilliantly lighted movie houses, stores, and Coca-Cola signs. It was a charming city; big enough to support a symphony orchestra and small enough to have an almost provincial friendliness. Strange, what a respected position the rabbi occupies among Fundamentalist Protestants. Strange, too, about the South itself. As a high school boy in Brooklyn, if he ever thought of the South at all, it was usually in terms of a big white fellow standing over a terrified Negro, holding a whip in one hand and a mint julep in the other. Rabbi Geller smiled and shook his head as he recalled that here in Elizabeth, North Carolina, among Scotch Presbyterians and orthodox Baptists, he had met some of the kindest people in the world.

And this brought Rabbi Geller to review in his mind the never-ending effort of Jewish middle-class life in the South to become one with the "population mass" surrounding it. He recalled the recent discussion he had had with Rabbi Toback and Herman Gordon on the subject. Toback, with his nine Southern pulpits over a thirty-year period, had paradoxical footnotes to contribute. For one thing, he pointed out that the few Jewish "non-conformists" in the South such as the union organizer, the public welfare worker, or the member of the Urban League,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were sources of great anxiety to the Jewish community at large, who feared the "Gentile reaction." Yet somehow these very same Jewish odd-fish seem to have more contacts and friends within the white Protestant society than do the main body of Jews, for all their desperate effort to reflect the habits and the prejudices of the majority. Gordon contributed his footnote. True, the "trouble-maker" got himself known chiefly by appearing before a city council, for instance, with a "protest" of some kind; or perhaps delivering a speech at a trade union council; or attending an unsegregated meeting or concert; or maybe writing a "letter to the editor," maybe even protesting against the teaching of the Protestant religion in the free public schools. However, while such activities and public opinions scarcely endear him to the great mass of the majority, they do identify him with the daily life of the general community.

Besides, he gathers more than one Gentile ally in the process, which, paradoxically, the main body of "conforming" Jews never acquire. The Southern white Protestant arches his back at the fellow from the North who throws a brick over the wall and runs away; but if he sticks around, that same fellow becomes part—the accepted, dissident part—and the attitude toward him changes completely; while the main Jewish community, which remains wholly segregated from the Gentile community after sundown each day, remain outsiders. By that same token, the main Jewish community's desire to mix seems to express itself chiefly in a man's ambition to join the Gentile country club, or his wife's to join the Gentile book or garden club. When these attempts fail, he gives up, aggrieved, and seeks consolation in a more intensified "Jewish work," throwing himself completely into the work and activities of the temple, reducing in the process the actual religious service to only one, and a minor one, of its activities. The ensuing scramble for *koved* and "honors," and the piling of one activity upon another, leads, of course, to an even greater self-absorption and exclusion. And, in turn, this isolation tends to add to the suspicion and fear of anti-Semitism so pervasive in the entire region.

This, at any rate, was how the matter looked to Mr. Gordon.

Rabbi Geller nodded assent at this point: "Yes, one thing shocked me, when I came South, the almost unbelievably intense fear of anti-Semitism."

"Of course, you are not wrong," said Rabbi Toback. "And how strange that this terrible fear of anti-Semitism exists at a moment when anti-Semitism as a political weapon is at its weakest."

"Rabbi Toback as usual is the philosopher," said Gordon. "Today, it would probably be political suicide for a candidate in the most remote rural village of the South to be branded an anti-Semite; yet 'combating anti-Semitism' is the day-by-day and hour-by-hour concern of the middle-class Southern Jews. They fear the Jewish CIO official; they fear the Jew who interests himself in Negro causes; if a Jewish intellectual settles among them they watch his every move, and fear his every public statement; they even send delegations to the several national Jewish organizations asking them please not to submit 'friend-of-the-court' petitions in the Negro segregation cases before the United States Supreme Court; they jump at shadows, and at every chalk mark on the sidewalk; and they also keep themselves informed of the hour-by-hour itinerary of Gerald L. K. Smith. Sometimes I wonder how it is possible for successful businessmen with ordinary honorable records, and large inventories and wealth, and fine homes, and after two world wars in which they and their sons participated, to really fear that all of that can be swept away by some letter to the editor, a speech, or a pamphlet."

"I am surprised that you do not know the answer," said Rabbi Toback. "It is all quite understandable. The Jew in the South is, so to speak, among the unemployed and unemployable, as far as the general community is concerned. There are no clerks, salesgirls, mechanics, civil servants, or white-collar workers among us. Even in a comparatively large city like Elizabeth, you, Gordon, and Rabbi Geller here, are the only two Jews in town who are not self-employed, and the same is essentially true of the entire South. We form a self-enclosed proprietary class, in short—a middle class. And you know, of course, that fear is the great middle-class disease, and in this respect the Jews are no different from the Gentiles. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gentile middle class, too, experiences constant, gnawing fear: 'government controls,' 'labor unions,' 'Negroes,' 'taxes,' 'Roosevelt,' 'Truman,' and others, which they substitute from time to time. No wonder that the fear which the Jew experiences is more pronounced, since as a member of the middle class *and* a Jew, he feels himself thus doubly exposed.

"Compare my own youth down on the Lower East Side of New York. I experienced and witnessed poverty which would make our Negro sharecroppers look like members of the station-wagon set by comparison; yet I doubt whether I have ever really known the security that I enjoyed down on Cherry Street as a boy and a young man. Eric Hoffer said it: the ghetto was a fortress as much as a prison. Today in the South our people, though they enjoy great prosperity and—as we have agreed—anti-Semitism as an active threat is at its lowest ebb—well, they seem to feel the need of the ghetto. But, unhappily, it doesn't work, not on the present terrain; the self-imposed segregation from their opposite numbers in the Gentile middle class contributes only to aggravating fear."

"LET me philosophize a bit myself," Gordon had said. "I remember my mother used to be terribly worried when things were going good for us. Why, she almost shook with fright, for fear something would happen to spoil it."

"Yes," said Rabbi Toback, "it's not too much different from the Negro. I cannot begin to describe to you the difference, socially and economically, between the Negro today and the Negro I found here thirty years ago. Yet at this very best moment of his life in the South, he has doubled his efforts in the courts of the land to achieve still further gains. My friends, in Egypt the Promised Land is a nebulous thing. It is on Mount Nebo that you really begin to move heaven and earth to reach your goal."

IT WAS getting dark and Rabbi Geller roused himself from his thoughts. Sarah would be waiting and wondering. He decided to take a taxi home, but first he'd walk down the hill to Liggett's to phone her, so she wouldn't worry. As to his question, "What of the rabbinate?" he could see the fear of anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and intensified Jewish activities and growing isolation, on the other, and between them the rabbinate taking on a character different from any he had ever dreamed of, "mixing with the members," fearing and fighting anti-Semitism.

Rabbi Toback had sent him a few excerpts from a sermon he had delivered the previous Friday evening at Kenilworth: "I came back to that very thing we discussed at your house several weeks ago," the elderly rabbi wrote. "I told my congregation that the Gentile is neither fascinated by, nor interested in, what Horace Kallen has called 'the amateur Gentile'; that basically the Gentile feels more at ease when confronted with a definite asserted value, whether it be 'rabbi,' 'CIO,' 'Roman Catholic,' or anything else. Even though he may be hostile, he would rather have ten recognizable values than one ambiguity. To him an ambiguity is an enigma which he has neither the time nor the inclination to examine thoroughly. I summed up the sermon with my favorite statement: 'For us, there is only one possible road to complete relaxation as happy members of this society; either you become a self-respecting Jew, standing unafraid for what you are and what you stand for—or you become a Christian.'"

Sarah wanted the rabbi to wait in front of Liggett's, she would pick him up. She said that a telegram had come for him and perhaps he might want to answer it while they were downtown. What was in the telegram? Sarah said that it was from the Placement Committee in Cincinnati. They wanted to know whether the rabbi would be interested—the pulpit at Kenilworth, South Carolina, had opened up.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CEDARS OF LEBANON

THREE TALMUDIC TALES

RALPH GORDON

The Angels Yield the Law

"THE nature of heaven," said Moses, "is the nature of flame:
Flower-flame, water-flame, flame of thought;
And if I contend with the angels, they will consume

My speech with theirs." Then in a division of light
He saw the throne. "Cool heat by heat," he said,
And touched the throne. At that the angels were mute.

"Were you in bondage," he cried, "and had you need
Of the sweetness of the law? Has the image of gold
Cheapened your faces, and have you denied

"God with your lips? Does all your labor yield
Nothing but the stale office of stale life,
Because the Sabbath is dead?" He turned, and held

Their eyes with his eyes, as he seized the rough
Stones of the mountain luminous with the law.
"These are for man!" he cried. Was it relief,

The sigh he heard behind him, as far below
He saw blurred faces searching the difficult sky?

The Two Sabbaths

CARRYING only his own shadow home
From synagogue, upon the Sabbath eve,
A good man will look up to the candle flame

At the Sabbath window, and will feel the love
Of the holy Sabbath warm about his heart:
The white cloth, braided loaf, and tidy stove;

And his good angel proudly will assert
Claim on the Sabbath: "May the next Sabbath be
Mine, even as this!" he will say; and no retort

Is granted his evil angel, but with a wry
Smile, he must say: "Amen!" But should a man bring
His peace to a slattern house, the blowzy brow

Of a slack wife, a smirched cloth, the mean clang
Of angry pots, his evil angel will gain
Command of the Sabbath: "May the next Sabbath belong

"To me, even as this!" he cries; and the moan
Of the good angel answers him: "Amen!"

RALPH GORDON's poetry has appeared in various periodicals, including, of course, COMMENTARY. Mr. Gordon teaches English at the City College of New York, and is the author of two volumes on the techniques of poetry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My Children Are Growing Up

"AH, YES," said Gabriel, "that is what He said;
But let me tell you how the matter stood.

"Johanan had concluded. 'No, my friend,'
Said Eleazar, 'that won't do; my mind
Is loyal to doubt. The proof! I want the proof!'
Johanan smiled: 'I call upon this leaf,
I call upon its branch and mother tree
To bow if I am right.' At once the bough,
At once the lordly tree bowed down. The crowd
Clapped in amazement, and Johanan spread
His hand in triumph. But Eleazar looked
No more than courteous. 'Let us not be tricked
By nature willing to accommodate,'
He said; 'how does this dipping prove you right?'
Johanan flushed: his eyes glanced off, and saw
The brook careering toward them. 'Now, I say,'
He held his hand up, 'let this brook turn back
To prove me right!' At once the plunging brook
Turned and leaped backwards, and a shout went up
At such spontaneous justice. But the drop
Of Eleazar's eyelids bespoke scorn:
'This magic is delightful. But to turn
Brooks, and bend boughs—how does it further truth?'
He asked, and made his bearded smile a wraith
Of gentle disenchantment. Then ablaze
Johanan's voice burst round them: 'Let this breeze
Fill with God's breath! Let Him declare me right!'
And even as he spoke they heard the great
Breaking of thunder: 'Verily, it is so,
Johanan, my servant.' And the summer sky
Trembled with glory. But Eleazar still
Sat unaffrighted; even, his hovering smile
Deepened a little: 'No, no, my friends,' he said,
'Truth needs no such to-do! The laws God made,
God will abide by. Come, Johanan, we two
Must find the truth between us. Let us try!'

"Shocking?" said Gabriel; "well, I thought, who knows?
I'll take this to the Throne. 'O Lord, Thy ways,'
I said, 'are hidden in wisdom. Can this man
Be just in Thy sight?' And God said: 'Again,
Gabriel, man attains Me; for his soul,
Loving My laws, loves Me. Ah, Gabriel,
My children are growing up!' So said the Lord,
And I was filled with wonder at His word."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON THE HORIZON

LORD JOWITT AND THE CASE OF ALGER HISS

A Lawyer Examines the British Jurist's Logic

JAMES GROSSMAN

WHEN Lord Jowitt's book, *The Strange Case of Alger Hiss*, was about to appear in America, the copies that had already been distributed were withdrawn and it was announced that the publication was being delayed. The delay had something of that hint of the sinister that has hung over the Hiss case from the beginning. Just as one had constantly heard that there was an ugly truth at the bottom of the case that was being suppressed, now one heard that Lord Jowitt's book was to be suppressed in America. This was easy to believe, for we live, it has been very justly said, not under a reign of terror but under a reign of the terrified; we expect the worst and are almost disappointed when it does not come.

Now that the American edition is out one can see that the reason officially given for the delay was the true one; a great many changes have been made in the text. It must surely be unusual that a book on a legal subject by a distinguished lawyer is revised to meet criticism by laymen. Yet this seems to be what has happened in the case of Lord Jowitt's book. The changes that have been made in the American edition are apparently intended to correct errors of fact and faults in reasoning pointed out by reviewers of the British edition.

The curious thing about Lord Jowitt's errors is that, substantial as they are, their elimination has in no way affected the general tenor of his argument. On occasion, because of changes he has made, his premises will disappear entirely, but his conclusions remain undisturbed. This result is the logical consequence of the book's general approach to its subject. This approach is a devastating, thoroughgoing skepticism, applied however only to a strictly limited field of observation: the words and conduct of Whittaker Chambers.

RUNNING through Lord Jowitt's book is an unexpressed syllogism that is something like this: if Chambers made a mistake in anything he has said, or even if he has said anything that cannot be corroborated, his statement must be treated as being deliberately false; since he has thus been proved to be deliberately false in matters that cannot be corroborated, we should doubt his testimony even in matters that seem fully corroborated.

This one-sided application of doubt not only creates different standards for judging

---

Hiss and Chambers, the Rosenbergs, perhaps now Harry Dexter White—current history, it seems, revolves around investigations, grand jury proceedings, Congressional hearings, and trials, and we will have to become somewhat expert in legal matters if we are to judge intelligently some of the most important issues of our times. Lord Jowitt, formerly Lord Chancellor in the British Labor government, has written a book (*The Strange Case of Alger Hiss;* British edition, Hodder and Stoughton 20/; American edition, Doubleday, $3.95) analyzing the record of the Hiss trial, and questioning the verdict arrived at. Here JAMES GROSSMAN, a New York lawyer and writer, examines Lord Jowitt's analysis, which has created some stir on both sides of the water. Mr. Grossman is the author of *James Fenimore Cooper*, in the American Men of Letters Series. He was born in New York City and holds degrees from both the College and the Law School of Columbia University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chambers and Hiss but also creates different standards for judging Chambers himself at different times. He is sometimes considered as having been what he says he was—a treacherous, deceitful Communist; and it is suggested that this makes him untrustworthy now. At other times Lord Jowitt writes as if Chambers admits that he held in the past the reactionary political views he now holds; hence Chambers' charge that Hiss is a Communist is untrustworthy. ("To a man like Chambers, who admits he saw no difference between Liberals, Socialists, and New Dealers on the one hand and Communists on the other, this [sympathy with the Socialist party, which Lord Jowitt attributes to the Hisses] may have been proof 'as strong as Holy Writ' that Hiss was a Communist.")

The greatest triumph of skepticism is in the solution of the question of Chambers' motive for lying about Alger Hiss. Lord Jowitt doubts the value of the psychiatrists' testimony on Chambers' "psychopathic personality"; doctors, he says, draw too generous conclusions from too slender means. Yet it is precisely from the slenderest of means—the psychiatrists' analysis of Chambers' "books and poems" (his books were all translations and his poems a mere handful)—that Lord Jowitt has come to the conclusion, or suggests that his reader come to the conclusion, that "the absence of motive is explained." The explanation is never stated explicitly, and I am not sure that it amounts to more than that Chambers may have lied without motive.

Lord Jowitt, on the basis of his own reading of Chambers' testimony and of Chambers' autobiography, *Witness*, has decided that "with Chambers the desire to embroider and embellish is so transcendent that I do not believe he knows when he is leaving the straight and narrow path of truth." If Lord Jowitt is right, one would expect to find progressive distortions of the truth by Chambers reaching a climax in *Witness*. There is no such progression. *Witness* brings the Hiss case to a climax only aesthetically—it is one of the great books of our time, and one would think that it is proof of an ordered and not of a disordered mind. Perhaps no autobiographer has ever had Chambers' peculiar problem, in that practically his whole life had already, before he sat down to write it, been told and retold in great detail and examined and cross-examined at lengthy hearings and trials. Despite this, Chambers in his autobiography retells his story with freshness and makes it an exciting narrative. But more important for our purpose, *Witness* is remarkable for its faithfulness to the record that had already been set down. Had it varied, undoubtedly a motion for a new trial would have been made in the Hiss case on the very ground of that variance.

How difficult it can be not to depart from the record, Lord Jowitt's book itself illustrates. In the British edition he wrote that when Chambers appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in August 1948 and charged that Alger Hiss and others who had been in the government service had been Communists, Chambers was asked if he had documents to prove this, to which he replied that he had no evidence of any documents having been "turned over," and "was at pains to deny that the group was in any way concerned with espionage." In the American edition Lord Jowitt has changed every one of these statements, because they are all incorrect. Where he had written that Chambers was inevitably asked about documentary proof, he has now written instead, "Curiously enough, no such question was asked. . . ." Since Chambers had not been asked about espionage and certainly had not been at pains to deny it, Lord Jowitt has now written instead that Chambers "clearly implied that the group was not concerned with espionage."

Actually, Chambers in his House Committee testimony was unclear on whether the Ware Communist group in Washington was at all concerned with espionage. Espionage as a secondary activity seems to be implied in Chambers' statement that "The purpose of this group at that time was not primarily espionage." And when Lord Jowitt writes that it is admitted that Chambers never revealed either to Adolph Berle (in 1939) or to Ray Murphy of the State Department (to whom he spoke in 1945 and 1946 about Communism) anything suggesting espionage, he adds yet further errors in his reading of the record. In speaking to Berle, Chambers must have made some connection between Communism and espionage, for the very first words in Berle's contemporaneous notes are "Underground Espionage

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Agent." And there is an unclear statement in Ray Murphy's notes ("The persons listed below are said to have disclosed much confidential matter") that seems to me to suggest espionage.

Lord Jowitt's conclusion thus makes it seem that when Chambers in the libel suit, on November 17, made his revelation of espionage by Hiss, he was making a startlingly new charge that was absolutely without any connection with any of his previous statements about Communism. The facts seem to me to show that Chambers' position has been more consistent. He had throughout linked Communism with spying, but (until defending himself in the libel suit) had named no spies; in fact, in October 1948 in the Grand Jury hearing he denied that he could name one.

LORD JOWITT and Chambers differ only superficially as to the latter's motives in suppressing knowledge of Hiss's espionage until the examination in the libel suit, when Chambers produced copies and summaries of State Department documents in Hiss's handwriting or typed on Hiss's typewriters and stated that Hiss had given them to him. Lord Jowitt is certain that Chambers in not revealing what he knew about spying was thinking of himself and not of the others. Since Chambers, in order to suppress the truth successfully, had to suppress it both about himself and the others, it is impossible to decide whether he was primarily acting for the others, as he claims, and only by accident for himself, or whether he was primarily acting for himself and only by accident for the others. Altruism and selfishness here become indistinguishable, without any real difference between them, and which motive one picks as the decisive one depends on which motive one finds more plausible as an explanation of conduct. Lord Jowitt here probably has the more plausible theory, not because he is inherently right, but because, as Fenimore Cooper has pointed out, the lower the motive ascribed to a man's conduct the easier it is for us to understand it.

This theory of Lord Jowitt's (which incidentally must have as its underlying assumption Hiss's guilt) is more probable than the alternative that he advances: Chambers had been truthful in indicating that there had been no espionage; "his later story was a complete fabrication to escape from the difficulties of the libel action." And in the British edition he insinuates, in favor of this theory, that Chambers, fearing exposure and ruin, attempted suicide just a day or two before he produced the documents at the pre-trial examination on November 17. An argument from consciousness of guilt is dubious at best, for one can never be reasonably sure what it is that a man feels guilty about. This particular argument has the additional weakness of being wrong in its facts. Chambers contemplated suicide in mid-November but decided against it, and did not make the suicide attempt until three weeks later.

In the American edition Lord Jowitt has corrected his error in date. The correction destroys his argument's principal support; but the argument is still made, and in a wording that is literally true but carries an erroneous suggestion: "Chambers describes in *Witness* how he contemplated suicide before he decided to produce the documents, and how, having produced them, but before testifying on their contents, he actually tried to encompass that crime." I do not know what Lord Jowitt means when he speaks of the attempt as being made "before testifying on their contents." I have read the entire transcript of the record of the second trial and have read fairly full accounts of the first trial, and it seems to me that Chambers never testified on the *contents* of these documents. Lord Jowitt's statement is true only in the sense that Chambers' suicide attempt was made before the occurrence of an event that has yet to take place.

To Chambers' consciousness of guilt Lord Jowitt contrasts Hiss's consciousness of innocence, to use the phrase of Claude Cross, the defense lawyer at the second trial. In the vigor and promptness of his denials of guilt, Alger Hiss has certainly acted according to our conventional image of innocence. And yet this may only show that Hiss had no reason to believe that Chambers had preserved any documents.

At the most, it might prove that he *felt* innocent. Lord Jowitt never shows the slightest sign of understanding that the Communist espionage about which Chambers testified was a crime undertaken not for money but out of high-mindedness, consistent not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only with a feeling of innocence but with an aggressive sense of virtue. It was a crime brought about by devotion to a cause. In view of this there is no force in Lord Jowitt's claim that Hiss wouldn't, as a matter of prudence, have delivered to Chambers papers typed on the Hiss typewriter or written by himself. The zeal for a better world does not generally stop at some mere point of prudence, and certainly not at the point of trusting a fellow zealot.

ALTHOUGH Lord Jowitt is fairly emphatic in drawing inferences adverse to Chambers on the issues of fact at the periphery of the case, he is by no means so definite on the issues of fact at its heart. He never explicitly demands absolute certainty, yet he seems to suggest that we should be in doubt as to Hiss's guilt so long as there is a theoretical possibility of his innocence. But Lord Jowitt never considers how extreme are the assumptions that we have to make if we are to believe that the jury was wrong and that Hiss was innocent.

For Hiss to be innocent we have to assume a deliberate plot against him by Chambers, beginning in July 1936 and maturing in 1948, and aided in its course by members of the FBI. We have to assume also that Chambers has had constant good luck in escaping detection, and Hiss constant bad luck, for on every vital issue the explanation consistent with innocence is downright improbable, or much less probable than the explanation consistent with guilt. I do not have space to illustrate all of these points and can set down only a few:

(1) Chambers testified that Hiss gave his old Ford to a Communist party member, using an unsuspecting auto dealer as an intermediate transferee. Hiss denied this and said he gave the old Ford to Chambers as part of a subleasing arrangement. Motor vehicle records show that Hiss in his own handwriting in July 1936 transferred his Ford, not to Chambers, but to an auto dealer, and that on the next day the dealer transferred it to a man who, when questioned in 1948, refused on the ground of possible self-incrimination to say whether he was a Communist. On this, Lord Jowitt says, "Now, of course, this transaction, if Hiss was responsible for it, would be enough to stamp him as an avowed Communist." On Hiss's behalf, Lord Jowitt can only suggest that perhaps Chambers, to build up a case against Hiss, induced Hiss to make the transfer. If Lord Jowitt is right, Chambers has had the good luck of planning a bit of villainy in 1936 and having it come out a dozen years later exactly as he planned it, and Hiss has had the bad luck of forgetting that it was Chambers who induced him to transfer the car and to write in the name of the motor dealer.

(2) Chambers claimed that Hiss loaned him $400 in 1937 to buy a car. The records show that Hiss withdrew $400 from a savings account in cash on November 19 and that Chambers paid $486 in cash for a car on November 23. The Hisses claimed that they used the $400 on cash purchases for furnishing a new home; but it seems to be a fact that the new home was not leased until December and could not be occupied until the end of the year. As Lord Jowitt says, in the American edition, the "explanation which Hiss gave for this withdrawal was unconvincing." The loan story is important, for, if true, it shows the parties as in contact with each other more than a year after Hiss said their acquaintance had stopped, and it shows Chambers as having a much closer relation with him than Hiss ever admitted. For Hiss to be right, he would have had to have the bad luck of a foolish and unnecessary withdrawal of cash and also the bad luck of its coincidence in time with Chambers' purchase. More than that, Chambers had somehow to learn of the withdrawal. Lord Jowitt blandly suggests that the FBI told Chambers about it. There is not the slightest evidence of this.

(3) Mr. and Mrs. Chambers had an extraordinary knowledge of the details of the Hisses' life (details as varied as the color of their wallpaper and Mrs. Hiss's interest in taking courses at Mercy Hospital, Baltimore) in the years when, according to Hiss, the two families no longer saw each other. Lord Jowitt insinuates that for some of these details the FBI was Chambers' informant. But on some details Chambers testified at the House Committee hearings, and Mrs. Chambers at the pre-trial examination in the libel suit, which in both instances was before the FBI was ever known to be in the case.

(4) Hiss's only explanation of the four summaries in his own handwriting of cablegrams to the State Department is that he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wrote these summaries and used them in reporting orally to his superior on the contents of incoming cables. The summaries are remarkably formal for this purpose and sound as if prepared for the use of someone outside the Department. Thus a cable from London (and the information copies distributed by the State Department) identifies the sender only as Johnson, and a cable from Shanghai (and the information copies) identifies the sender only as Gauss; but Hiss's summary is more elaborate and states: "Johnson U.S. chargé at London cabled that. . . ." and "Gauss U.S. consul at Shanghai cabled that. . . ." Since Hiss knew who these men were, it would seem that his superior, who had been longer in the State Department, knew the same; only an outsider would have to be told who they were. This same way of identifying the sender is used also in the summaries that were typed on the Hiss typewriter, and no one has suggested an innocent origin for the typed documents. Moreover, some of the handwritten summaries appear in two versions, a very rough note and a more amplified one. The rough note would seem to be enough if it was to be used only in talking to his superior, but it was certainly too sketchy for an outsider's use. Hiss could explain the two drafts of each note only as the result of a failure of memory and having to go back to the cablegram in each case to amplify his first draft. This going back to the cablegram is crucial to his explanation, for if he could amplify his notes in some cases from memory alone, why write the amplification out? Why not merely deliver it orally to his superior? Yet in the one instance where the rough note has no indication of date, the amplified version does not give the precise date, but says "About March 2"—surely much more like an amplification from memory than from a second glance at the cablegram. Everything about the handwritten summaries fits only awkwardly into Hiss's explanation of them but is particularly consistent with Chambers' —that in the course of Hiss's spying activities, cables crossed his desk that he could not take home for copying, and these he summarized in his own handwriting.

(5) As I stated, no exculpating explanation has been advanced for the copies and summaries of State Department documents typed on the Hiss typewriter. If Hiss had them typed, it can only be that he was giving them to Chambers. Hiss's defense with respect to the typing of these documents, which are dated chiefly over the first three months of 1938, was that the typewriter had been given away to the children of a servant in December 1937. But while the gift was established, the date was vague; in fact Perry Catlett's statement to the FBI before the trial indicated the gift in April 1938 or later, and the testimony of a man who lived in the Catlett house corroborated this. For Hiss to be innocent of connection with the typing of the documents, not only had the typewriter to be at the Catletts' in December 1937 but Whittaker Chambers, or someone acting for him, had had somehow—and no one can quite suggest how—to get into the Catlett home and, unobserved, type sixty-four pages, many of them single-spaced.

In order to support the Hiss defense we are asked at each turn in weighing ordinary events to accept the improbable and ignore the probable; the *cumulative* effect of so many improbabilities is downright absurdity.

I HAVE tried to be fair to Lord Jowitt's meaning, but often I cannot be sure what it is. He has a way of juxtaposing two facts which suggests to the reader an inference so extreme that one hesitates to believe that it was intended, yet the juxtaposition is meaningless unless that very inference is to be drawn. In the sheer diligence of his suggestiveness and of his insinuations—it would take a longer book than his to work out their logical implications and to answer them—Lord Jowitt reminds me of Senator McCarthy. The Senator and the Earl were both I believe trial lawyers, and they seem at times to have that gift of making everything seem suspicious which is the chief technique of an old school of advocacy.

Lord Jowitt as a human being has as much right to his doubts as any man. But, as a former Lord Chancellor and as an author, his position is somewhat different. To write so long an argument on the Hiss case and to come to no conclusion is of course itself a conclusion and a significant one. In net effect *The Strange Case of Alger Hiss* is not an exercise in reasoning but an appeal to authority, to the spectacle of the former highest judicial officer of Great Britain in a state of doubt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STUDY OF MAN

MORE INSANITY THAN A CENTURY AGO?

New Light on a Current Belief

NATHAN GLAZER

THE various social sciences, like all disciplines possessing an individual history and a corps of specially trained practitioners, ask their own questions, and answer them in their own way. It is not often that the questions they ask are the layman's questions, or the answers they give ones that would satisfy a layman. When they ask a question which has served for decades as one of the common counters in discussions of modern life, and at the same time answer it—that is news.

It is in just this sense that a slim volume recently published by the Free Press (*Psychosis and Civilization,* by Herbert Goldhamer and Alexander Marshall, 126 pp., $4.00) is news. The question it asks is: is it true that the frequency of mental disorder—specifically, of psychoses—has increased over the past hundred years? We know that enormous changes have occurred in the way we live in these hundred years. Many more of us live in cities, the cities are larger and noisier, we travel greater distances to and from work, are subject in larger measure to the tyranny of the clock and the need to oblige a superior—and in view of all this, it would appear a truism to assert that man, subjected to an increasingly inhuman (or at any rate nonhuman) environment, increasingly breaks down under the strain. And indeed, all around us are huge installations which we know house many thousands of the mentally disordered, and the budgets of state governments groan under the pressure of maintaining them and building more. Surely all this, if not new, is far more characteristic of our present-day lives than of life a hundred years ago. But *are* we sure?

THIS would seem to be a question on which we cannot achieve certainty. For it does not appear very likely that we could find statistics for the 1840's and 1850's which would enable us to answer such a question. Previous studies had, indeed, not gone back very far —hence it was no surprise to find that some of them had discovered no change in the frequency of mental disease. The one study that went furthest back (to 1881, in Massachusetts) did show a rather large increase.

Goldhamer and Marshall decided to go back even further, and in effect constructed their own statistics on the basis of data from the state of Massachusetts beginning with the year 1840. At that time, there were only three institutions in the state devoted specifically to the insane—a private hospital in Boston, established in 1818 (McLean), the Worcester Hospital, then only eight years old, and the South Boston Hospital, then only one year old. In addition, the insane were received in state and town almshouses and in the prisons.

In view of these limited facilities, could the data on the insane be very complete or reliable? Goldhamer and Marshall argue that they were, and very effectively. Quoting from the early reports of the asylums and their superintendents, they demonstrate, for example, that a very clear distinction was made between the psychotic (then called "lunatics") and the mentally de-

---

NATHAN GLAZER here reports on a remarkable study of the frequency of insanity in the United States, from 1840 to the present, that tends to shake views held by almost everyone. Mr. Glazer is an associate editor of COMMENTARY and a frequent contributor to this department.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fective (then called "idiots"). The latter were almost entirely excluded from the limited places available in the asylums. In the same way, those suffering from epilepsy without psychosis and alcoholism without psychosis were also clearly demarcated from the psychotic, and for the most part excluded. The detailed descriptions of the disorders from which the lunatics of the 1840's and 1850's suffered indicate clearly that we deal with the very same diseases —even though "mania," "melancholia," "dementia," and "monomania of suspicion" had to make do, in those days, to describe what we currently call "manic-depressive psychosis," "schizophrenia," and "paranoia." The authors carefully exclude the possibilities of error related to the readmission of patients (all of the figures quoted here refer to first admissions), or to the chance that the mentally ill of Massachusetts went out of the state for treatment (not likely, in view of the fact that Massachusetts then—as now—had facilities for the insane as good or better than any other state in the union), or to the fact that the hospitals of Massachusetts contained out-of-state patients (they did, but the record-keeping was excellent, and these can be excluded).

In short, with a most exemplary and remarkable care and precision, the authors of this study establish rates for the frequency of admission for psychosis in Massachusetts for the years 1840 to 1885, rates that must be very close to the true ones and which in any case will not be easily improved upon.

THE rates thus established rise from 41 per 100,000 for 1840-45 to 58 per 100,000 in 1880-84. (This rise is undoubtedly a product of the increase in facilities during the period.) These rates seem at first glance much lower than the rate of admissions in 1940: the 1940 admission rate, applied to a population with the age structure of that of the 1840's, would give a rate today of 85 per 100,000, and applied to the population of the 1880's, 91 per 100,000.

However, when one breaks down these overall rates of admission to examine the rate for each age group, a remarkable and most meaningful difference in the pattern of admissions appears. The 1940 rate rises rapidly for the ages from ten to about thirty, then is about the same for those aged from thirty to fifty, then begins to rise rapidly again, to become very high for the old. In the 19th century, we find the same rise in the rate of admissions for the young, the same plateau between the ages of thirty and fifty, and then a *drop* in the rate of admissions past the age of fifty. *The differences between the 19th-century period and our own day are created entirely by the large number of admissions for psychoses of those older than fifty today. Up to the age of fifty, the rates a hundred years ago and today are roughly the same.* (As we shall see later, there is a technical reason having to do with change in admissions practices that accounts for the rise in the over-fifty group.)

It seems almost inconceivable that this should be the case. Even if there has been no real increase in the frequency of psychosis, one would expect a great increase in the number of hospitalized psychotics. For, comparing the situation today with that in even as late a year as 1885, we find that facilities are much more plentiful and easily available, that the popular attitude toward hospitalization for mental disease is much more favorable, that non-psychotic disorders such as alcoholism, idiocy, and even psychoneuroses are increasingly dealt with in mental hospitals.

Yet, no matter what our bases of comparison, the frequency of psychosis in the middle of the 19th century is not less than it is today. The earliest rates on record for Massachusetts, for 1840-44, when, as we have indicated, there were few facilities and those only in existence a few years, exceed, for ages thirty to sixty, those for the state of Maine in 1940. And the admission rates for psychosis in Suffolk County—that is, Boston—were in 1875-79 higher than they were in New York City in 1929-31, for all ages up to fifty-five! Even as early as 1840-45, the Suffolk County rate was higher than the New York City rate for the age group forty to sixty. A comparison of the rates in 1885 and 1930 "reveals that the male 1885 rate for the . . . age group 20-40 slightly exceeds that of the contemporary period and that the 1885 female rates for ages 20-50 exceed the corresponding 1930 figures."

NOR do we deal with an exceptional situation when we deal with Massachusetts. The authors carefully consider any factor that might have tended to lead to a higher frequency of mental disease in Massachusetts in the period from 1840 to 1885. Thus, they examine the bearing of the proportion of foreign-born, which was low at the beginning of this period

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(5 per cent in 1840) but rose rapidly, with the Irish immigration, to become quite high by the end of the period (1860, 21 per cent; 1870, 24 per cent; 1880, 25 per cent). However, this proportion of foreign-born has since been fairly constant (it was also 25 per cent in 1930) and could therefore not have been the cause of a peculiarly high rate of psychosis in the middle of the 19th century.

Nor is it the fact that Massachusetts was, among all the states of the union, particularly prone to mental disorder in the middle of the 19th century. Wherever we can find figures, we will find about as much psychosis—that is to say, admissions to hospitals for psychosis—in the 19th century as in the 20th. Thus, Oneida County, in New York State, had easy access to a state hospital established in Utica in 1843. The rate of admissions from 1843 to 1865 for the age group from thirty to fifty is only slightly below the 1930 New York State rate (adjusted for the rural-urban proportion that prevailed in Oneida County during this period). Perhaps most remarkable of all is the case of Fayette County, Kentucky, which had access to the hospital in Lexington, and for which we have figures from as early as 1824. For the years 1824 to 1842 (at the earlier date, Kentucky was scarcely out of the frontier stage), this county "had [a] higher total admission rate in the central age groups than . . . Kentucky . . . today."

EVEN before we begin to try to understand why there should have been as much psychosis in the middle years of the 19th century as there is today, we have to consider how it was physically possible for admissions for psychosis to the few institutions that existed in the 1840's to give a rate, even if only for certain age groups, equal to that of today.

There are a number of factors pointed to by Goldhamer and Marshall that are relevant. The first institutions opened specifically for the insane were established for those who created the worst problems for society—thus, the Worcester Hospital in Massachusetts was specifically limited to the "violent and furious." Those psychoses associated with senility, which are responsible for such a large proportion of the inmates of present-day mental hospitals, were in effect ruled out by this definition, and it was only much later that such persons were taken into hospitals. Idiots and those of subnormal intelligence were also ruled out. In effect, these hospitals were established for persons afflicted with manic-depressive psychosis, paranoia, and some of the forms of schizophrenia. These are diseases which characteristically strike young people and people in the middle years of life. It was such people who filled the new hospitals established in the 30's, 40's, and 50's of the 19th century. The psychoses of senility, which are responsible for the presence of most of the aged in our hospitals, and subnormal intelligence, which is responsible for a large proportion of the young, were both managed within the family. And since families were larger, and their living quarters also larger, there was no great tendency to hospitalize these unfortunates.

Consequently, Goldhamer and Marshall argue that even the great increase which has taken place in the last century in the proportions of old people hospitalized for psychosis is an increase only in hospitalization, not in actual frequency. Sufferers from the psychoses of senility, they argue, quoting contemporary records and the advice of leading doctors of the time, remained at home, and there was little pressure to get them into hospitals.

Similarly, the much smaller increase that has occurred in the numbers of young people (under twenty) hospitalized does not indicate a real increase of psychosis in this group, for a very large proportion of those in this age group today are hospitalized for non-psychotic conditions.

In other words: even where we see an apparent increase over a hundred years ago in the numbers in our state hospitals today (that is, among those under twenty and over fifty), the increase can be explained by the expansion of facilities.

WHAT are we to conclude from all this? The authors of this study are extremely cautious. All we can conclude, they say, is that there has been no great change in the conditions causing psychosis in this country in the past hundred years. Possibly if we could carry our study back another hundred years we would find a great change; possibly by 1840 those conditions of modern life that people believe lead to mental disorder had already been established. But it is not likely that any statistical studies can carry us back before 1840. It is also possible there has been a great increase in the frequency of neurosis; but this is a difficult matter to test statistically.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another conclusion, they point out, is compatible with these results: that is, that in psychosis we deal with a condition which is independent of environmental circumstances, a condition dependent on heredity or physiological aberration, which, like some physical diseases, strikes a certain proportion of the population. The authors refer to a recent study of the frequency of psychosis on the Danish island of Bornholm, an island inhabited principally by farmers and fishermen. It turns out that the frequency of psychosis there is roughly what we find in New York State. Were it not for this finding, one might be tempted to suggest that the trauma of leaving one's home and emigrating across the ocean had affected Americans in general so deeply that the same proportion of psychosis existed among frontiersmen as among city dwellers. However, the Bornholm study shows us that even where the population has deep roots, we find the same measure of mental disorder as in America.

We do not yet know enough to be able to do more than speculate as to the implications of these findings. We already know enough, however, to lay to rest one of the most popular clichés of our culture, one that we run into again and again in sociological, political, and religious writing, and which has often served as the basis for very lazy conclusions. We may hope that the Goldhamer and Marshall study will be only the first of a series analyzing the records of different countries, and different times.

MOURNING MY GRANDMOTHER

HOWARD O. SACKLER

Now in the rooms around us wails
Of "Shalt, thou shalt" resound remorse
from beds
To boards to blame, as the borrowed flesh
Slips from the naked vows,
But closed, quiet these windows behind your
plants
The "heathens" admired;
mirror
And photographs draped or faced to the
wall
In mourning.

Before you were lost to my language
Merely, now lost to me wholly, free
Of the skins of prayer and the pregnant
Poor you loved.

O queenly carried
On painful feet through dawn streets
Walling despised alarms, you swayed
Among the numbling faithful, nailing
Spirit to their daily letter
With "Amen, amen" and no more, daily
Giving largely lightly, certain that charity
Was natural gratuity for life at large;

And fattened a duck in your kitchen
For weeks, and kept intact a dazed carp
In the bathtub until his time,
Shrugging off protests of translation
And loving the creatures, without pet
Names, to the very knife.

For life
Was death for fish and fowl, and lip-bitten
Burials of infants forgotten, and year-old
Agonies, penned abroad, arriving
in ashes;

And the form was an only
Child to be cherished.

So late your surrounding neighbors still
Vibrate beside their supper and sorrow;
No wand of your presence shall ever again
Untwin despairs for an hour, nor spring
Between me and my punishment.

Dying,
You shrilled a song from your girlhood
And moaned for me to study the Law.

Mourning over, your mirror
Will be faced, and the first-born son,
Shut in with it, will prolong,
Prolong his audience there
Until with a step
the dead Prince
Confronts the living whipping-boy.

HOWARD O. SACKLER's first book of poems, *Want My Shepherd*, will appear this month under the imprint of Caedmon Publishers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS FROM READERS

Israel's Economy

To the Editor of Commentary:

I congratulate you on your courage in publishing "The Hard Road to Israeli Self-Dependence" (August 1953). As a lifelong Zionist I have been heartbroken by the socialist-minded government of Israel which has prevented world Jewry from participating in the country's development. As proven by Schlomo Riemer, socialism is creating a labor force in Israel that will soon be the most inefficient among the enlightened peoples. Without exports Israel cannot survive and she will never be able to sell on the world market without the incentive of free and open competition; unless, of course, all Israelis are willing to settle on the land and be satisfied with a primitive standard of living for several generations. . . . Socialism has failed in every country in the world. There is not one socialist-governed nation in the world today, except of course the Communist states where it is enforced by dictatorship. When will the people of Israel wake up and elect a government of a truly democratic type?

Samuel Jacobson

Montreal, Canada

To the Editor of Commentary:

Schlomo Riemer's diagnosis of Israel's economic ills ("The Hard Road to Israeli Self-Dependence") is certainly accurate enough, but his solution for them—the creation of a Grants Office to pass on projects for which American Jewish dollars are spent—is fantastic. During a visit to Israel I heard so many of its citizens urge that solution that I actually sounded out several Jewish community leaders when I returned home. Whatever their reactions, all agreed that "you can't do it."

The major obstacle in the way is of course the "package deal" by which Jewish community funds are raised. Any suggested or implied threat to withhold funds from the Israelis unless they "play ball" would threaten the entire fund-raising structure affecting both our local and national institutions. . . .

My own solution, for what it is worth, for converting "aloof charitable" giving into "constructive participation" is the influx into Israel of *direct* private investment capital from the United States. There is already at hand some experimental evidence to support the view that when American Jews really risk capital—not deductible from taxes—and actually participate in its economic affairs, they get their fair share of influence over economic policies.

One thing is certain: unless American Jews take a hand in Israel's economic direction it will tend more and more to dependence on charity funds. As one Israeli so penetratingly put it: "If you take the UJA dollars away from us we will die, but we will not live until you do."

(Dr.) Jacob B. Shohan

West Orange, New Jersey

The Need to Clarify

To the Editor of Commentary:

Although the main body of Norman Podhoretz's article "Sholom Aleichem: Jewishness Is Jews" (September 1953) is excellent, the philosophy inherent in his concluding paragraph is ultimately as corrosively destructive of Sholom Aleichem as it is of Judaism. If Stanley Edgar Hyman could call books that appear to be novels, and are not, "pseudo-fictions," then surely one is justified in calling Mr. Podhoretz's concept of Jewishness pseudo-Jewish. It is a nice gay glib concept: "to make sense of a classically senseless situation, the Jewish answer was still the answer of the book of Job—that there is no answer." And previously Podhoretz has compared Mottel to Job (!), saying that "the privations and sufferings of the Jews bore no relation whatsoever to anything they did; they suffered only because of what they *were*."

It is indeed possible to carry casuistry a long way, and it is terribly possible to misinterpret the Book of Job. And if Job—and the Jews—have any meaning at all, it is that they "were" —and are—precisely because of what they *did*. Namely, you can't interpret any one part of the Bible without a long, piercing, simultaneous side-glance at its source; i.e., God. If God *is* the source of the Bible, and Jewish theologians assuredly state that He is, then one must not treat the Book of Job as if Genesis did not precede it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We get one clear and distinct interpretation from Genesis, not "no answer" as Podhoretz blithely says. Though it is true that "one can either rage like a Dostoevsky, or laugh," this is only permissible if one's rage or one's laughter is directed toward clarification, not simply senseless smashing of the skull against a brick wall or braying like a jackass at cosmic inanity. Both Dostoevsky and Sholom Aleichem sought earnestly (unlike "Defoe, Smollett, Disraeli, and Dickens") and with all their beings to clarify. Like Job's, Dostoevsky's ragings culminated in, "therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" (Job 42:3).

Neither Job, Dostoevsky, nor Sholom Aleichem would for a moment agree that the lesson of the Jews is to recognize man's involvement in a "classically senseless situation." They would all agree "that optimism and a love of life must necessarily reflect superficiality of spirit." *That is*—if and when, as Mr. Podhoretz assumes they do, these two concepts form a logical dichotomy. As they don't, never have, and never will, they would say man's situation, far from being senseless, is clear for those who *will* understand, and if you *will* understand you can do no less than be optimistic and love life!

IVAN B. ABRAMS

New York City

Jews and Manual Labor

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a practicing engineer who spent the past fifteen years in the factories of this country, I was particularly attracted by Warner Bloomberg, Jr.'s, article, "Jew in the Factory" (November 1953). He describes a lunchtime discussion with a young Polish American, Andy, in which he, Bloomberg, tries to explain why Jews are not found in industry "working with their hands." I was disturbed because Bloomberg was obviously on the defensive, finding it necessary to relate "the long history of oppression and persecutions that drove European Jewry so long ago from the crafts of the land. . . ." The implication here, of course, is that there is something ennobling or virtuous in hard, manual, unskilled labor—a fiction perpetrated, in my opinion, by those who have never made a career of it. Common sense, or if necessary a few years digging ditches, picking peas, or moving steel plate, should convince even the most romantic that far from being ennobling pursuits, they are on the contrary degrading to the dignity of man and the sooner supplanted by the machine the better. . . .

LOUIS SOLTANOFF

Salisbury, Maryland

Unwatered Wine

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Having admired Mr. Maurice Samuel deeply in the past, I was disappointed in reading "The Sundering of Israel and American Jewry" (October 1953). True, the same beautiful style, the ringing prose. But what happened to Mr. Samuel's Zionism? Would he have a proud young Israeli of Nahalal, Ain Charod, or Beth Alpha advise American Jewish youth to stay in New York, Chicago, or Detroit? It was Mr. Samuel who so movingly told the story of Palestine's first settlers putting the wastelands of an aged country above the teeming boulevards of New York. . . . Could an activist Zionism ever have arisen on a background of faith in the lands of the dispersion? Without a denial of Jewish life in the *galuth*, would Zionism have been anything but the pusillanimous philanthropy of the Stateside variety? . . .

It is true that the Jewish position in America is different from that of Jews in other places and at other times, but does Mr. Samuel really feel that the difference is so great as to make Zionist logic inapplicable to his own community? I don't think anyone will slaughter him in the near future, but must things even go nearly that far to validate the Zionist contention that Jewish life in the *galuth* is insecure in one way or another, culturally, politically, psychologically, economically; that the "Exile" is a uniformly disgraceful thing, in principle if not in actuality? . . .

The lack of spunk and imagination which has characterized the young American Jew of this fateful generation is ill covered by sniping at his Israeli cousin. . . . Zionists will gain nothing by pouring more and more water into the wine of a great cause. May young people go there and live the idea. Neither Israel's spiritual values nor the culture of the American Jewish community will be the worse off for it.

JOHN E. HOFMAN

Detroit, Michigan

"The Juggler"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For those readers who may have expected an early reply to Meyer Levin's unwarranted comments on *The Juggler* in your letter section of August 1953, it is unfortunate that owing to a mischance in COMMENTARY's editorial offices, my letter of August 25, 1953, was not printed. At this late date, a point-by-point reply would make little sense. I do feel, however, that for those who may have been troubled by Mr. Levin's implications, it should be noted that I had not read his novel before writing my own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The few elements in both books which may seem to Mr. Levin to be similar can only have arisen out of our common experiences in Israel. That these elements are not significant can best be demonstrated by the fact that no reviewer of my novel, in either the Jewish or non-Jewish press, made mention of any of the "similarities" which disturb Mr. Levin.

MICHAEL BLANKFORT

Los Angeles, California

The Bible

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am sorry that Spencer Brown's enthusiasm for the "Bible" ("The Bible and a Liberal Education," October 1953), as bound by the Christian churches, blinded him to the fact that he was dealing with two very different books—or rather collections of books. It is only from a *religious* point of view that one can speak of the Bible and comprehend not only the Hebrew Scriptures, written between the 12th and (at the latest) 3rd centuries B.C.E., but also the Greek writings of the New Testament, separated from these by half a millennium. From a *critical* point of view, from the point of view of the Bible as *literature*, which Mr. Brown explicitly takes up, there is hardly any connection between them. And I think that if Mr. Brown were a more perceptive critic of ancient literature, he would have made this distinction and in making it spared certain religious sensibilities.

One overwhelming point would at least have been alluded to, if he had taken the point of view of the critic: that in the Hebrew Scriptures we have a collection of documents written from different and contradictory points of view, and consequently illuminating with remarkable power a whole world of thought and action; while in the New Testament we have a work of direct religious propaganda, closer in its form to the Koran or the Book of Mormon than to the Hebrew Scriptures. A figure such as Jesus is inconceivable in the Hebrew Scriptures—where even God makes mistakes.

MATHIAS REZALG

Tel Aviv, Israel

Jews in the Paper-Backs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Meyer Levin ("The East Side Gangsters of the Paper-Backs," October 1953) seems to be overly agitated about the defamatory nature of certain books which are now getting extremely wide circulation through the tremendous sales volume of the paper-backs. Of course, no one can be particularly happy when the family skeleton is dragged out for public display. . . . But persons of all nationalities (including the Scandinavian) appear in the popular thrillers of crime and violence and we shouldn't be unduly upset over our share of miscreants among the galaxy of disreputable characters. We don't need to fear that the sensible reader will identify the whole Jewish community with the shady gentry of the "Jewish" underworld-novels; and the pathological anti-Semites will damn us even if every existing Jew is a paragon of respectability. . . .

The sale of these reprehensible books, among Jewish readers at least, could be considerably lessened, however, if scandalized Jewish public opinion and the press would just ignore them, instead of raising a great outcry of denunciations which is so much added publicity. . . .

I wonder whether the fact that we are so eagerly intent on disproving the negative rather than accentuating the positive proves that our Jewishness is really not a conscious but a self-conscious one.

J. S. OESTREICHER

New York City

Jew and Israeli

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

COMMENTARY is to be congratulated on having been able to publish Rabbi Dolgin's extremely penetrating presentation of what lies at the root of the worries of broad sections of the Jewish people, both in Israel and abroad ("Can We Stay Jews Outside 'The Land'?" by David Ben Gurion and Simon A. Dolgin, September 1953).

But, then, what *is* the desirability of the State of Israel's serving as a bridge between grandchildren, when on the one side of that bridge will stand offspring who, according to the standards of those on the opposite end, are not Jewish but Gentile, having been born from a non-Jewish mother? Or are we to understand Rabbi Dolgin's correspondent to the effect that the State of Israel ought to become a bridge between Jewry in the dispersion and all Israelis irrespective of their religious affiliations?

The aprioristic identification of "Israeli" and "Jewish" is a basic fault and may turn out to be a national calamity. If we do not remain wide awake to its artificiality and defectiveness the State of Israel might well, in the days of our grandchildren, prove to have been the most effective barrier between the Jewish and Israeli peoples.

(DR.) L. WAGENAAR

Jerusalem, Israel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Zionist Ideals—Israeli Realities

LEVEL SUNLIGHT. By MAURICE SAMUEL. Knopf. 308 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by SOLOMON F. BLOOM

LEVEL SUNLIGHT, in its own unsystematic but skillful way, manages to combine between the same covers a spiritual autobiography and "confession"; a historical sketch of the development of Zionism, and of the controversies that both divided and animated it; a description of the achievements, as well as shortcomings, of Israel; a consideration of the relations of the new state to its own past and to the contemporary scene, to the Diaspora, the West, and the world at large; and, finally, a prospectus for the future. Richly documented from personal observation, many visits to Israel, and the long experience of a Zionist, Mr. Samuel's book guides us into the backgrounds of Israel, and offers a soul-searching analysis of her present situation.

ABOVE all else, *Level Sunlight* is a cry from a wounded heart. The ideal of Zionism has been realized, at least formally. Indeed, reality has exceeded the expectations of the most optimistic. Many Zionists had been willing to settle for an autonomous community, perhaps for a "homeland" within the British Commonwealth. There were—and still are—some Zionists who would even have preferred the latter. But 1948 came and brought, rather suddenly, complete independence and statehood. The cup was running over.

Since then something seems to have gone wrong. Mr. Samuel presents an impressive bill of particulars. The moral *élan* of the *kibbutzim* has deteriorated. The issue of Communism is splitting some of the communities down the middle. The labor movement is ridden by monopolistic and bureaucratic tendencies. The drivers' cooperative is ruthless. Workmanship is generally poor. A military spirit is abroad. More significantly, national policy leaves much to be desired. The "Ingathering of the Exiles" has crowded the little country with an inert, retarded, and virtually unassimilable mass of Oriental Jews. Finally, the prevailing attitude toward the Jews of the Diaspora, particularly American Jewry, is narrow and dangerous: they are often written down as lost to Judaism, and condemned as sterile and suicidal.

We are experiencing, in short, a "trough in the wave of Zionism and its mission." Only a rebirth of the old spirit can repair the damaged ideal.

SUCH is the picture drawn by Mr. Samuel. Is it a just picture, is it balanced? Certainly Mr. Samuel's approach is that of a painstaking, discriminating, and affectionate critic. His picture is not wholly black, nor his indictment sweeping. He details, and extols, the real and lasting achievements, which outweigh the shortcomings. The *kibbutzim* are by no means bankrupt. There is economic progress, although it does not seem commensurate with the needs of the country. Mr. Samuel considers that the "trough" of Zionism is at least in part a reflection of the decline in the moral climate of the world at large. It may be only temporary.

There is ground then for hoping that a refreshing of the idealistic spirit is not only desirable but possible. Indeed, *Level Sunlight* is itself evidence that the moral flame of Zionism is not extinguished, for the author represents not only himself but a whole wing of Zionism, both in Israel and abroad.

What gives one pause somewhat is his point of departure. Mr. Samuel—let us say it plainly and not at all invidiously—is a romantic, happily incurable—for what is the use of a curable romantic? For example, his passion for the late Chaim Weizmann is immutable and eternal. As everybody knows by now, Weizmann, in his last ten years, had become the symbol of Zionism, but only the symbol. The active direction in the last phase of British rule,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

during the War for Independence, and in the period since the victory, has been in the hands of a rival party and personnel. Mr. Samuel thinks that many of the difficulties and inadequacies that he lays to that party would have been avoided had the hand of the old helmsman been at the tiller. Perhaps. This is the sort of thing nobody can prove or disprove. ". . . I believe with many others that if the Weizmann of twenty years ago had been with us today the crisis in Israel and world Jewry would be far less sharp, the prospects of recovery more immediate." Why does Mr. Samuel think so? Because Weizmann was a great man. This strikes one as an inadequate basis for political criticism and prognosis. It is pietistic rather than political.

The fact is that Weizmann's leadership was deliberately and definitely repudiated, and it is the opposition that is responsible for the creation of the state, as well as for its shortcomings, insofar as these were avoidable. To Mr. Samuel, however, "the Jewish state as a thing in itself, self-justified, self-explanatory, has not the power to move tens of thousands of people to great creative action . . . a Jewish state as a thing in itself is not a Jewish concept at all. It was not so to the teachers of antiquity, who have left their denunciations of it—and of those Jews who nourished it—as the classic and imperishable 'literature' of Judaism. It was not so throughout the Jewish exile; and, in spite of aberrations, it was not so in the time of classic Zionism. Israel's turning away from world Jewry is a turning away from the Prophetic subordination of statism to the Idea that transcends the state."

This position requires that Weizmann should be described as the living embodiment of the Jewish Idea, and that the Jewish Idea should be described in more or less transcendental terms. Mr. Samuel is nothing if not consistent. Weizmann is exalted as the supreme modern man, successor of the Prophets, a distinguished scientist, and the world statesman who had the "most triumphant personal career of the 20th century." Also: ". . . the character of the Jewish people will be revealed by what it thinks of Weizmann." But is it not more likely that the character of a man will be revealed, on the contrary, by what a people thinks of *him*?

Mr. Samuel's broader conception of the Idea is formed by his cultural presuppositions. He thinks of the Western world as the battleground of two great rival concepts of the ideal man. One is the Jewish ideal: "Prophetic, cooperative, Christlike, noncombative, non-competitive, and supremely hopeful." The other is the "gentleman": "pagan, sportive, gallant, combative, honor-seeking, and supremely tragic." Zionism arose out of no practical need, no historical circumstance, no response to persecution, no philanthropic sentiment; it is the modern embodiment of the Prophetic ideal. It was not, it is strongly implied, of a piece with the nationalisms that burgeoned in the 19th century.

Mr. Samuel's treatment of the present is touched with a similar unrealism. He quite properly criticizes the Israelis for their dismissal of American Judaism. He quite properly urges that the severance of Israel from world Jewry holds serious dangers, particularly for Israel. Certainly he is right in insisting that Judaism is more inspiring as an integral totality, in history and in geography, than cut up into mutually repellent provincialisms. But to say, for example, that American Jewry is destined to make a great contribution to Jewish history is to express a hope rather than a promise. We share his hope, and it is encouraging to see an old Zionist adopt a more positive attitude toward American Jewry. But there is danger that he might become as romantic about its prospects as he once was about the prospects of Zionism.

It is a good deal to say that "American Jewry is the leader of democracy in world Jewry exactly as America is the leader of democracy in the world at large." But "exactly as" is exactly right. Are not Great Britain and France, and British and French Jewries, co-equal leaders of democracy? Mr. Samuel is quick to admit that, "like America as a whole, American Jewry does not yet know how to handle the leadership." If you don't know how to handle the leadership, you are hardly entitled to be called a leader.

Mr. Samuel's views of American Jewry and Israel are redolent of the hyperbolic and high-keyed sentiments and theories that have usually characterized millennial and apocalyptic movements, including many a conservatism, a socialism, and a nationalism. When whole peoples are churned up and uprooted, the soil is cleared for the prairie fires of high-souled evocations. That the expressions of this spirit

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are often extreme and exaggerated is to be expected. Mr. Samuel recalls that the Zionists indulged in some high-flown and unfair propaganda years before the State of Israel was founded: "On the one hand we said that the creation of a Jewish homeland would add dignity and content to Jewish life everywhere. On the other hand, when we spoke of Chalutzim, and of all those that went to build Palestine, we would by contrast depict the life of the Jews outside of Palestine as being, in its nature, irremediably debased. *We did not quite mean it.* [My italics—S.F.B.] We had in fact the picture of a realizable ideal of American Jewish life, a dignified and creative life. We spoke this way out of admiration of the Chalutzim, out of propagandist exaggeration, out of traditions carried over from past humiliations, out of a present frustration (the non-existence, as yet, of a Jewish homeland), out of a feeling of guilt that we had chosen the easier way, and out of irritation with our opponents, whose timidity about Jewish and Zionistic values was a debasement of both Judaism and Americanism. We carried over into our extramural utterances our intramural Yiddish self-criticisms, which have always been hyperbolic.

"I repeat that we did not quite mean it; but its effects on the nascent Jewish homeland were bad. We encouraged within Palestine a superior attitude toward Jews outside of it, which became most manifest in the young generations. We watched without protest, we even tacitly concurred in the growth of a spirit, especially in the schools, which reflected all of our own exaggerated negations of Jewish life outside of Palestine. This has contributed greatly to the fission of world Jewry. The youth of Israel has been poisoned against Judaism outside of Israel. Its contempt for Jews who will not come to Israel, its rejection of a possible Judaism anywhere but within the confines of the country, is one of the failures of the Zionist movement. The elder generation in Israel has been pulled along in the process; and . . . the most thoughtful veteran Israelis, the immigrants of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years ago, cannot bring themselves to think of American Jewry as having a right to a regionalist destiny."

HERE Mr. Samuel has written, from his courageous heart, the true story. Yet who will throw the first stone when urgent historical movements fall into extravagance and fantasy? But, to be entirely fair, are not the deviations and antics of some of the Israelis similar in character and similar in origin to those of the older Zionists? Perhaps the Israelis mean their more extreme expressions no more seriously than, it turns out, the Zionists meant theirs. We shall see in time. Meanwhile, the Zionists, especially American Zionists, have excellent reason for remaining tolerant and sympathetic.

All in all, Mr. Samuel has written a tingling, stirring, a very Jewish book. Not "cooperative, Christlike, non-combative, non-competitive, and supremely hopeful," but tender, painstakingly intelligent and informed, always dissatisfied, terribly insistent, somewhat dogmatic and moralistic, above all, deadly serious, very gentlemanly, and—all right—"Prophetic." Fortunately, for every Jeremiah there is also an Isaiah.

Silone and the Peasants

A HANDFUL OF BLACKBERRIES. By IGNAZIO SILONE. Harper. 314 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by MARTIN GREENBERG

MORE than ten years ago Ignazio Silone wrote that "a society is renewed . . . when its humblest element acquires a value. Today the Living is to be found among the Negroes, in the Polish ghettoes, among the Chinese coolies, among the peons, among the *cafoni*, among the proletarians." In this list it is of course the *cafoni*, or poor Italian peasants, to whom Silone the novelist has consistently turned, like one of his own heroes seeking his inspiration from that perennial source. *A Handful of Blackberries* is no exception.

I opened the book with a more than ordinary amount of curiosity. I hadn't read anything by him for years, since *A Seed Beneath the Snow*. Before the war he had been a conspicuous figure in international literature, and, in exile in Zurich, the chief representative of free Italian letters. His novels, like André Malraux's, dealt with Fascism, Communism, and the revolutionary ideal; they had the relevance and pointedness that come from dealing with contemporary world issues. But Malraux's novels haven't worn too well, their brilliance turning with the passage of time into something close to meretricious. Would one have to make a similar dispiriting revision of one's judgment of Silone's work?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM ARAMAIC PAPYRI

Edited by EMIL G. KRAELING

These rare papyri of the 5th century B. C., a collection unique in the western world, are published here for the first time. The documents concern the Jewish military colony on the island of Elephantine, at Assuan in Egypt. Dr. Kraeling has written an extensive account of the colony and its history and has edited the new papyri with full commentary. John D. Cooney, curator of the Egyptian Department of the Brooklyn Museum, has contributed an account of the unrolling of the papyri. The volume is extensively illustrated with drawings and photographs. $10.00

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Publishers of the Yale Judaica Series

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No, I am glad to say. *A Handful of Blackberries* is an unsuccessful novel, but to see this is not to suffer a disabusement in which all his works are implicated. It is a failure, but an honest failure; one needn't search back in his earlier novels to find out where the *Zeitgeist* had taken one in. I re-read *Bread and Wine* and find it still a good and successful book. The realities with which Malraux seemed to be dealing, turn, when we read his books today, into a French intellectual's highflown talk. Silone's realities—the grandeur and misery of the Italian peasantry, the ancient, immovable injustice of Italian rural society, and the searching conscience of the hero—have stayed real.

THE plot of *A Handful of Blackberries* turns about disillusionment with Communism. This theme figured in Silone's earlier novels, but only off-stage as it were: the exiled revolutionist hero, having been thrown into a spiritual crisis by his break with Communism, returns surreptitiously to his native countryside, where the wisdom and sufferings of an ancient peasantry teach him to recover his moral clarity and show him the way to rededicating himself to a purer revolutionary ideal. In this present work, however, whose scene is Italy just after the liberation, Communists and Communism figure as central elements. And that is just the trouble, because they lack reality; the center of the novel does not hold. Oscar and Ruggero, two Communist types, are done with a stridency that is a far cry from the fine comedy of the Fascist figures of his earlier novels. Rocco de Donatis, a Communist partisan hero who turns against Communism and is nursed back to moral health by the peasants, weakly echoes the brooding Pietro Spina of *Bread and Wine;* his reckless driving, as he dashes preposterously up and down the novel in a jeep, indicates the anguish of his soul.

I do not mean to suggest that Silone fails in his understanding of Communism. Perhaps he understands it too well, and is too anxious to make the reader understand. The novel's very thorough exposure of the character of Communism persuades our minds, but leaves our feelings unmoved. What seems to be the trouble is a want of artistic detachment.

There is also perhaps a too ready acceptance of peasant simplicities. In *A Handful of Blackberries,* the Communists very significantly join forces with the landlords to frustrate the peasants' action: Stalinism is not a new, complicated, and revolutionary thing, but only the old reactionary tyranny in a new skin. But this is too easy; the trouble is that Communism is both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary. To simplify in this way is to make a folk tale out of the novel.

Having said this, one can then go on to say that Silone's rural world is re-created in this novel with much of the old pathos, humor, and shrewdness—much rather than all, because his peasants tend to grow self-conscious and stand for something. They of course always stood for something, but in a completely natural and unforced way; now a little bit too much of the author's hand can be seen to enter into it.

What is it that they stand for? The Living, as I quoted Silone earlier as saying. Who then are the dead? Not so much the grasping local landowners—who are a kind of natural evil and the traditional antagonist of the peasants—as those all-powerful forces from the outside, from the city, who come into the villages to exploit and betray the peasants and make their ancient yoke heavier: in Fascist days, the Fascists; today the Communists.

The gulf between country and city, between life and death, yawns ever wider in Silone's stories. A peasant woman gives a piece of bread to a strange soldier knocking at her door. This is treason one day, according to the policeman who investigates the matter, and the next day—after the Fascist regime is overthrown—according to that same policeman, a heroic deed for which the authorities wish to give her a medal. But the woman knows that an act of charity is just an act of charity and shakes her head in astonishment. All this means of course that confusion and absurdity reign "out there" in the world, which seems a million miles away.

CONFUSION and absurdity and unreality. There is a funny passage in the book, very complicated in its irony, that perfectly expresses this cleavage between city and country. A Jewish refugee from Vienna, who had been taken in and protected by the mountain brigands of the Roadhouse, is dying. Zaccaria, the brigand leader, a shrewd, hearty peasant, has the local priest, Don Nicola, fetched through a snowstorm to perform the last rites; the laws of hospitality require it. But the priest must decline when he discovers the dying man

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is a Jew. This incomprehensible scruple exasperates Zaccaria; he tries to bribe Don Nicola, to no avail.

"'What he needs is a man of the Synagogue,' suggested the priest. 'He needs a rabbi.'

"Zaccaria asked: 'Are there any rabbis in the neighborhood?'

"'No, but there are some in Rome,' the priest assured him.

"'I see you're in a good humor,' snarled Zaccaria. 'You're good for nothing, but as if that weren't enough, you want to joke about it.'"

Zaccaria—in Southern Italy—thinks it a sensible question to ask if there are any rabbis in the neighborhood, but accuses Don Nicola of levity when he says there are some in Rome. Rome is more remote than a rabbi! The target of the irony here is certainly not the "unworldly" Zaccaria, but Rome, temporal and spiritual, so far removed from the true realm of natural piety that it has virtually ceased to exist.

Silone is a socialist. But the simple fellowship that he celebrates, consecrated with bread and wine and blackberries, is more akin to primitive Christianity than to modern socialism, especially when we consider its anti-urban overtones. In this book his peasants are now clearly not a social class in the Marxian sense, but fall into the ethico-religious category of the poor, who are always with us. There is a resigned quality about Silone's world, strongly stressed in this first post-liberation work:

"'When one Pope dies, they've always made another,' answered Berardo. 'That much we know.'

"'If you stole before, you'll steal again,' said Giacinto. 'If you starved before, you'll starve again. We all know that.'

"'But do you really believe things will never change?' repeated Massimiliano.

"'Ah, I'd like to see dogs bleating and sheep barking,' Giacinto told him.

"'They say there are countries where it has happened already,' said Baldassare. 'But as long as there are some to do the barking, we'll always be back where we were.'"

From this irremediable injustice, not human history, but only some Second Coming can now liberate Silone's peasants:

"'To the future Liberation.'

"'Future in what sense?' Don Nicola asked him. 'Imminent?'

"'Whenever it comes,' said Rocco. 'Next

"A mine of information, objectively stated . . . with utter accuracy."
—John Haynes Holmes

The Palestine Problem Today

By CARL HERMANN VOSS

"FEW Americans are better qualified than Carl Hermann Voss to appraise fairly the conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbors. His book answers practically all the questions both historic and current which any observer would ask. And the answers are as free from prejudice as a rightly convinced supporter of Israel can be expected to make."—*Roger N. Baldwin*

"Dr. Voss writes simply and sincerely, with Christian charity and with real hope for the future."
—George Fielding Eliot

Maps and photographs.
$1.50 hard bound, $.75 paper.

"A work of great and sound erudition."
—New York Herald Tribune

Foot of Pride

The Pressure of Christendom on the People of Israel for 1900 Years

By MALCOLM HAY

"This is an excellent history of the doctrine of 'anti-Semitism' . . . Mr. Hay points out all the techniques used and documents the reasons in each case. With the problem of world unity ever before us, this is a needed volume in every library . . ."—*Library Journal*

$4.50

At all bookstores

THE BEACON PRESS
Beacon Hill, Boston

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

year, or sixty or even two thousand years from now.'"

FROM being an anti-Fascist novelist, Silone has passed through anti-Communism to an attitude very close to religious. It seems to me that he has given up on the modern world; I cannot go along with him. And this attitude also seems to have landed him in a dead end as a novelist. Yet he remains honest and intelligent —and how superior to all the up-to-date Alberto Moravias of postwar Italy, with their equivocal writings and equivocal careers.

Communist Anti-Semitism

THE JEWS IN THE SOVIET SATELLITES. By PETER MEYER, BERNARD D. WEINRYB, EUGENE DUSCHINSKY, NICOLAS SYLVAIN. Syracuse University Press. 637 pp. $6.50.

Reviewed by HENRY L. ROBERTS

"WE ARE hated because we returned from the dead. . . . They look upon us as ghosts, and no one loves ghosts." This remark, made early in 1946 by the editor of a Zionist periodical in Transylvania, epitomizes the mood of this ably prepared and informative inquiry into the fate of the Jews in Eastern Europe after the defeat of Hitler. The narrative moves from country to country—Czechoslovakia, Poland (including the areas annexed by the Soviet Union), Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria—as the four authors develop the sorry sequence of events. Like Solomon M. Schwarz's *The Jews in the Soviet Union*, of which it is a pendent—being likewise sponsored by the American Jewish Committee—this study brings out the increasingly anti-Semitic attitude of the Communist regimes.

THE story is not dramatic; indeed, the idea of drama is somehow quite inappropriate. The Nazi extermination camps were, and remain, an ultimate climax of human agony, which a pitiful number of victims ultimately survived. Then history picked up the threads again. The anti-Semitism endemic to Eastern Europe was not dispelled by the Nazi horror. On the contrary, in the bitter struggle for physical survival right after the end of hostilities, it became sharper and more virulent; only its rationalizations changed. The restitution of Jewish property, the competition for housing and jobs: these became the immediate occasion for anti-Semitism. As the Communist danger mounted there was much *sotto voce* talk about "Jewish Communists." Once the Communists actually took over, the Jew as "capitalist" came under attack. Given the Communists' hostility to private enterprise, and to any social organization not controlled by themselves, and given, in addition, their growing fear of Western influence, it was inevitable that they should strike out at the Jewish communities in the satellite countries. Nor, with their unscrupulousness as to the means by which they achieved their ends, was it surprising that they should cater to anti-Semitic elements when it was convenient to do so; equivocate on the application of the restitution laws; turn a blind and indulgent eye to pressure groups opposing the reestablishment of Jewish businesses; and shift their tactics on Zionism and Jewish emigration purely according to the dictates of Soviet *raison d'état*. Indeed, the final twist, the positive display of anti-Semitism by the Communists themselves, as in the Prague trial and the Moscow doctors' "plot," was the almost normal outcome.

THE evidence given in this book of the reality of Communist anti-Semitism ought to convince any but the most resolute hair-splitter; those not convinced will be the ones who see anti-Semitism as defined exclusively in Nazi racist terminology—and the Communists arrive at some remarkably close approximations to that, too. Clearly, Communist anti-Semitism went well beyond anti-capitalism, anti-cosmopolitanism, or anti-Zionism. The most obvious demonstration of this is that Jewish Communists known to all as ardently hostile to capitalism, "cosmopolitanism," and the rest, were purged on these grounds. It may be that a reader unfamiliar with Eastern Europe will feel that the authors have been unduly sharp-eyed and sensitive in recording the more subtle signs of anti-Semitism—"revealing anti-Semitic slips" as one author calls them—but in this reviewer's opinion they are altogether correct: the veiled remark, the meaning of which is wholly clear to its hearers, is an old dodge in this part of the world.

Although the anti-Semitic theme is probably of most immediate interest to the general reader and was certainly a major preoccupa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion of the authors and the sponsoring organization, the impressive quantity of factual information assembled and organized in the book offers an even more important contribution. All four authors know their subject (it would be invidious, in such a successful piece of collaboration as this, to make comparisons): all were born and lived much of their lives in Eastern Europe; between them they are personally familiar with nearly every locality in the region. Thus they are able to give brief but authoritative reviews of the backgrounds of the different Jewish communities there—and these were considerably more variegated than one might expect. The wealth of statistical material—demographic, economic, and social—is a welcome relief from the impressionistic approach of so many works on Eastern Europe. In similar fashion, the authors devote much attention to the reorganization of Jewish communal life, the postwar changes in the pattern of Jewish economic activity, the measures in support of education and social welfare, the relations between the various Jewish organizations, and finally to the question of emigration, which again became a goal for Jews amid the growing insecurity they experienced in the "people's democracies." By tracing in detail the impact of Communist domination and progressive Sovietization on the Jewish communities, the book also provides a new vantage point for comprehending the meaning of Soviet expansion.

IF ANY criticism is to be made of this study, it is one almost inescapable with regard to a work of collaboration. It is evident that a good deal of attention has been given to the organization and editing of this book, but one is still left with a sense of loose ends. It is left to the reader, for example, to establish comparisons. Why does Communist behavior in Czechoslovakia appear to have varied in some respects from that in Poland or Hungary? Are these differences real, or do they reflect slightly different points of view on the part of the contributors, or is it because of the date at which the body of the manuscript was completed? The introduction attempts to bring the whole problem into focus; possibly this should have been the function of a general conclusion. As it stands the introduction is somewhat conventional, and some of the points it makes cannot have real meaning until the reader has finished the book. This criticism, made with

by DAVID BEN-GURION

REBIRTH *and* *Destiny of* ISRAEL

The inside story of how Israel came into being—and what it means to Americans.

A Magnificent Gift Book $10.

PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY
Publishers
15 E. 40 St., Desk 494 New York 16

Just published — the second edition of a philosophical classic!

REASON AND NATURE

An Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method

by MORRIS RAPHAEL COHEN

"There is hardly a branch of science or a phase of experience that its pages do not clarify. Certainly no book in its all embracing field can be trusted more completely."—*F. S. C. Northrop*

"I do most heartily agree with the emphasis which in some of his writings he has placed upon what seems to me that sole really scientific approach to philosophic problems."—*Bertrand Russell*

"One of the really distinguished minds in American thought."—*Irwin Edman*

I have read his writings with admiration and great profit . . . I envy the youth who sit at his feet."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

$6.00

Now ready at your bookstore or directly from the publisher

THE FREE PRESS
GLENCOE ILLINOIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vive La Difference!

AH, the French! They can appreciate the difference between froid and Freud, bon and bad, l'homme and female. But we're not so unwordly either.

FOR instance, we know the difference between the price of a so-called "first class" and tourist flight to the Mediterranean. Almost $250, that's all! That kind of saving, unless you're a money-sure businessman, can mean the difference between the old comforting thought you'd rather stay home, and actually getting across the ocean on the long-planned budget trip to Europe.

TOURIST CLASS is a specialty with us, the *only* class we carry, and we carry it with *class*. With us it is not a cheaper version of air travel; it is air travel without pretenses, at a practical price, just right for people with less money than Rockefeller. Let's review, and learn a few more things, about pertinent differences:

EL AL has the only tourist class on Constellations, seating two, instead of three abreast, offering fully reclining seats instead of sit-ups. This brings us to the difference between arriving in Europe with three days knocked off your time so you might, with luck, recover from a numb spine plus lack of sleep, or arriving fresh as the green Shannon carpetry you see from ahigh—able to make full use of your precious days on the other side of the Ocean.

IS A tourist class passenger a person who pays less and should therefore be satisfied with cold box or sandwich lunches? Not at El Al! Which, translated, means not at all! All our meals are hot, served with a smile by stewardesses who look as if they might have prepared them with their own loving hands.

WHETHER you take El Al to London, Paris, Rome, Athens or Israel, you can be certain that our cabin and ground crews, some born and raised in these places, all people of learned background, will be able to give you hot tourist tips from personal experience. El Al personnel will gladly share this experience with you to the extent of giving you personal notes of introduction to places you should know about.

YOU are likely to run into interesting people aboard our planes. Curious, intelligent, enthusiastic people, many among them, scholars, engineers, architects, people of the theater and the concert stage, bound for young Israel. Passengers have told us that they left New York alone and, by the time their plane landed in Europe some twelve hours later, they had new friends, new contacts, new interests—and a few modest ones even said they had learned a lot from some of their fellow passengers.

NOW, that you know what a *DIFFERENCE* the choice of an airline can make, plan your Mediterranean trip today. Come in, see or write us, and let's talk it over, then see your travel agent and tell him to book you on El Al. If he asks you why, you have the perfect retort: *"VIVE LA DIFFERENCE!"*

EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES

New York, Chicago, Los Angeles

full awareness of the enormous difficulties involved, must not, however, obscure the very solid contribution that has been made by this excellent study.

The "Real" Constitution

POLITICS AND THE CONSTITUTION IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. By WILLIAM WINSLOW CROSSKEY. University of Chicago Press. Vol. I, 708 pp.; Vol. II, 702 pp. $20.00.

Reviewed by DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

THE purpose of this book is definitely practical. Professor Crosskey, of the University of Chicago Law School, at the outset dramatizes his concern by a number of stories illustrating the "evil consequences" arising from the current theory of the Constitution. He tells us, for example, of a young railroad worker whose leg was crushed while coaling a locomotive, but who never secured compensation because of prolonged dispute over the precise province of "interstate" commerce, and hence over the jurisdiction of federal as against state courts. He urges that this kind of difficulty and many others would be avoided simply by recognizing a dominant and unitary national power of legislation in Congress, and similarly, a power in the Supreme Court and the federal judiciary to develop and apply a single unitary system of national law.

This position is intelligible enough, and might have been the basis for an extensive treatise on the evils of federalism and the peculiar problems of our constitutional government. But Professor Crosskey has chosen to write a different kind of book. Since there are these evils, he seems to argue, the true historical facts ought to be such as to make them unnecessary. Accordingly, he tries to construct a *historical* argument to serve his purpose.

Opening Part I ("The National Power over Commerce") with a chapter entitled, "The Supreme Court's Theory of the Incompleteness of the National Commerce Power, and Its Evil Consequences for the Country," he develops the thesis that our government was intended by the framers of the Constitution to be (and therefore now ought to be) a "national" and not essentially a federal one. He argues that the power of Congress to legislate was intended to be virtually unlimited (except by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the first ten amendments to the Constitution) in all matters of national interest; that the Supreme Court was not intended to have any general power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional; that the states were not meant to have that freedom from national legal control which the Supreme Court has sometimes given them; and that the intended constitutional limits on the legislative and judicial authority of states were much stricter than is generally supposed.

THE work, being essentially a legal brief, may be instructive for people unacquainted with that type of literature, provided they possess unlimited patience, stamina, and time. But such readers ought to be warned, by a reviewer who has read all this book's 1,381 tightly packed pages, that it is surely not designed for the lay reader, if indeed for any reader at all. Like some other colossi of the scholarly world, this work deserves to be admired more for the number of man-hours spent in its production than for the wisdom it communicates. Professor Crosskey's reasoning is, to say the least, devious, and is often exasperating; facts are accumulated with a view to overwhelming as much as convincing the reader. And the approach throughout is mildly ill-tempered, since the author seeks wherever possible to confuse the motives of his opponents with their arguments.

The great figures of history appear as heroes or as villains; as masters of prophetic insight or as simpletons. Jefferson and Madison, for example, since their positions, and even some of the documents they have left, often do not fit with Professor Crosskey's argument, are presented as cunning scoundrels, philosophical charlatans, unprincipled politicians, and very possibly (although here the author confesses that the evidence is incomplete) liars and forgers. Justice Holmes, Justice Frankfurter, Charles Warren, and John Chipman Gray also earn broad sneers.

Professor Crosskey's explicit argument is partly linguistic (showing how "popular" and technical word usage in the late 18th century justifies attributing to familiar phrases the most surprising meanings), and partly an argument from intent and motive. The argument from intent is an attempt to demonstrate—mostly from 17th- and 18th-century legal treatises, letters, and polemical literature—what must have been the purpose of the framers.

FUND RAISERS

National Jewish welfare organization requires capable men for campaign organization and fund raising positions. Fund raising experience, sales experience or public relations background preferred. Must have initiative, be free to travel extensively, and have driver's license. Salary plus expenses. In reply please give full details of education, background and experience.

Reply to **COMMENTARY, BOX 5**
34 West 33rd St. New York 1, N. Y.

New Manuscripts Welcome

In expanding its publication program, Public Affairs Press, publisher of distinguished books since 1938, is seeking high caliber non-fiction manuscripts —particularly in the fields of economics, political science, history, and sociology. If you have a manuscript which you would like to have considered, please send an outline or description to The Editor, Public Affairs Press, 2153 Florida Avenue, Washington 8, D. C.

And the argument from motive—expressing a sanctimonious approach to the Constitution as a form of words—adds up to the assertion that the framers of the Constitution were dominated by the desire to produce a thoroughly self-consistent document (such as might be drawn by the best law firm); that therefore it can have contained no superfluous or ambiguous words; and that the application of the proper technique of legal interpretation today will distill from the document the pure and perfect meaning which went into it in the late 18th century. Such meaning, it is assumed, will necessarily save us from the evils which since then ignorant and often ill-intentioned men have brought on us by ignoring the true meaning of the Sacred Document.

THIS book could not have been written had not Professor Crosskey overlooked certain elementary facts about the nature of institutions in general and of American history and institutions in particular. A piece of legislation, and especially a constitution, unlike a will or a real estate deed, is not drawn in the carpeted calm of a competent law office. The Constitution was a political and not merely a legal document; it was the product of compromises. The "intent" of its numerous and disagreeing framers may, as a matter of historical fact, have been a willingness to agree on a form of words which contained a merely minimal (and largely inexplicit) agreement, but behind which lurked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a host of unanswered questions, welcome ambiguities, and unresolved doubts. "Moreover, legislative ambiguity," Chief Justice Hughes once observed, "may at times not be wholly unintentional. It is not to be forgotten that important legislation sometimes shows the effect of compromises which have been induced by exigencies in its progress, and phrases with a convenient vagueness are referred to the courts for appropriate definition, each group interested in the measure claiming that the language adopted embodies its views." From this point of view, to look for "the true and consistent meaning" of the document in Professor Crosskey's sense, is to look for a black cat that isn't there.

The framers of the Constitution need not have been perfect legal technicians or prophets to have been very great men. And it was doubtless their lack of rigidity, and their refusal to demand thorough legalistic consistency, that enabled them to produce any constitution at all, much more the wise and viable document on which they managed to agree. In Justice Frankfurter's words, constitutional determinations should "express the sensibilities of statesmen, not the formulations of technicians."

Professor Crosskey's book might have been a useful irritant for some of us, by making us reexamine things which have seemed too obvious, and thus perhaps help us pierce the mists of familiarity. His observations, even when perverse and outlandish, are sometimes suggestive, and could lead others into unexplored areas. But he does all he can to discourage us from making such use of his work, by his bludgeoning dogmatism, his insistence that his sometimes bizarre interpretations are "completely certain," and his unambiguous message that the reader who does not follow him every step of the way must be a fool or a rascal. The contempt which he shows for his predecessors in legal history and for nearly all the judges who have sat on the Supreme Court is simply one way in which this book as a whole expresses two dangerous tendencies fostered by the dominant temper of American legal education.

First, a grossly anti-historical spirit. This book does a lot to help us understand the startling disproportion between the vast wealth and energy invested in American law schools and the meager attainments of American legal historians. "Faithfulness to the truth of history," Francis Parkman once remarked, "involves far more than a research, however patient and scrupulous, into special facts. Such facts may be detailed with the most minute exactness, and yet the narrative, taken as a whole, may be unmeaning or untrue. The narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the time. . . . He must himself be, as it were, a sharer or a spectator of the action he describes." But this is a humane occupation, which from a narrow practical and vocational point of view is "useless." The successful lawyer, we are told by our law schools, would do better to be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his own time. If he approaches the past at all, then he must do so, like Professor Crosskey, with a view to using it to support his remedies for the "evils" of the present day.

Second, a grossly anti-constitutional spirit. The spirit of constitutionalism is not that of the searcher for literal meanings, nor a rigid fundamentalism which is shocked by the wayward development of institutions. Rather it embraces a belief in some kind of higher law to restrain arbitrary power and the whims of popular, and even of scholarly, fashions; and at the same time includes a willingness to accept development in institutions.

Our political system is not likely to be improved by efforts, however ingenious, to show that present-day convenience (which Professor Crosskey believes lies in the almost unlimited power of Congress) happens to coincide with the particular legal devices intended by legal draftsmen two centuries ago. For we must accept the paradox which lies at the very heart of the idea of an institution. We must seek a moral continuity without demanding a literal consistency. We must not be incredulous or contemptuous of the honest efforts of statesmen and judges to develop institutions out of the documents, the notions—and even the ambiguities—bequeathed by the past. This gives to constitutionalism an elusiveness which can hardly satisfy the practical-minded lawyer. It requires of the historian an uncommon humility, a feeling for tradition, an imagination, a human sympathy, and a patience with the foibles of men. Without these we may replace the tentative and developmental spirit of our constitutional government by that arrogant precisionism and legalistic myopia which have been the hallmark of bureaucracies, and eventually of tyrannies, everywhere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This *I Believe*

by Pericles*

Athens versus Sparta

"ATHENS favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if to social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty.

"If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality; trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger.

"Instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all."

Published as a public service by

THE WELCH GRAPE JUICE COMPANY, INC.

J. M. Kaplan, President

*Born circa 493 BCE.
"Funeral Oration of Pericles," from
Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ethiopia's Jews

FALASHA ANTHOLOGY. Translations from Ethiopic sources, with an Introduction, by WOLF LESLAU. Yale Judaica Series, Vol. 6. Yale University Press. 222 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by S. D. GOITEIN

THE Falashas are a small community, formerly of an extremely warlike character, who live in the very heart of Ethiopia and profess a peculiar sort of Judaism. Whether they are Jews who in very remote times emigrated to North Eastern Africa, or—as I believe—mainly Ethiopians who adopted the tenets, practices, and literature of a now extinct Jewish sect, they rightly arrest the attention of anybody interested in Jewish things, for their strange religious life has some significant bearing on the general problem of the basic character of the Jewish community at large.

It was therefore an excellent idea to include an anthology of Falasha literature in the highly valuable Yale Judaica series edited by Professor Obermann, although this series is mainly devoted to annotated translations of the classics of Judaism such as Maimonides or Sa'adya. The task could not have been given to a better qualified scholar. Professor Wolf Leslau of Brandeis University is an expert on the languages of Ethiopia and has visited the country twice; in addition, he possesses a thorough Jewish erudition. The present volume gives to the English-reading public for the first time an extensive and intimate view of the life and literature of an extremely interesting branch of the Jewish religious community.

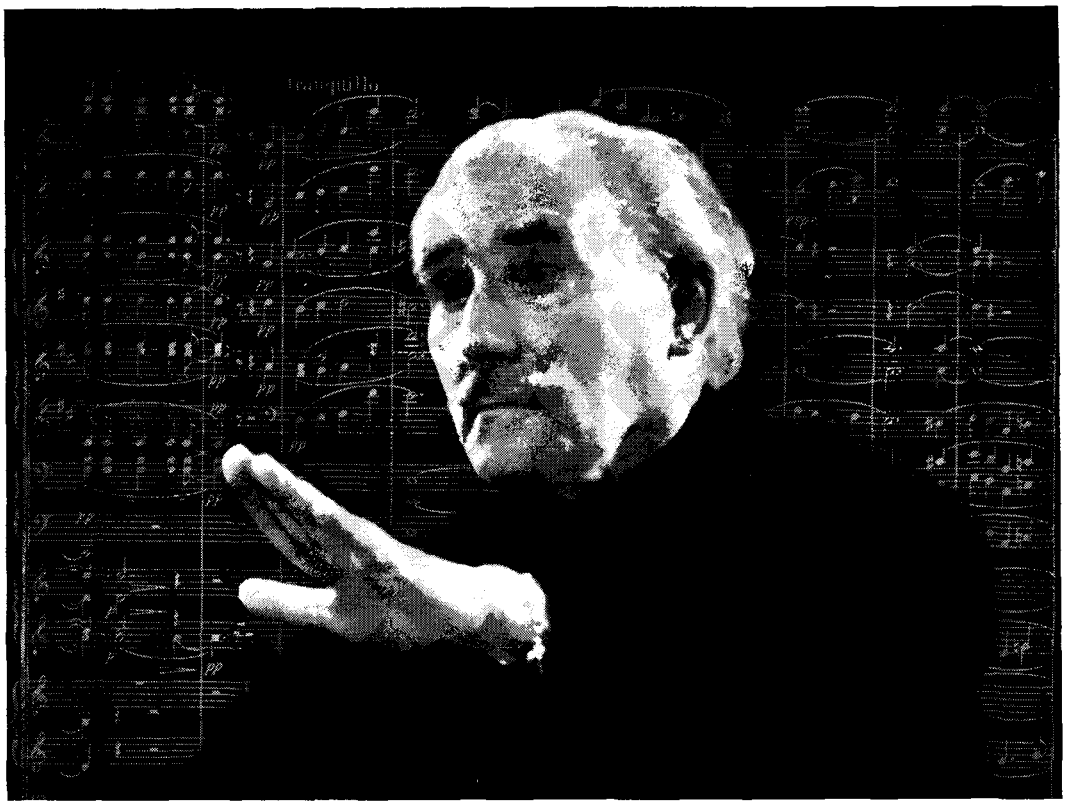
THE Falashas are called thus by their Christian neighbors. The word means "immigrants," which would indicate that they have come to their present habitat from another part of Ethiopia, a surmise corroborated by linguistic evidence. They call themselves "betha-Israel" —"House of Israel"—and claim to be descendants of the ancient Jewish people. Their religion shows clear connections with Jewish sectarian life during the Second Commonwealth. They have, for example, a strong religious concern with bodily cleanliness, and frequent ablutions in rivers play a most important role in their religious life. Their Christian neighbors, in fact, pretend to recognize a Falasha by "the smell of water" adhering to him. Women are completely separated from their families during their monthly periods and while in childbed, living in special huts outside the village; the practice is so common and seems so natural to everybody concerned, that—as Dr. Leslau assures us—the women thus secluded did not exhibit the slightest embarrassment while talking to him from their huts. It should be emphasized, however, that in old Arabic sources this custom is attributed to the Abyssinians in general, and it is of course widely practiced by primitive peoples elsewhere, including, in ancient times, some Jewish communities.

The Sabbath is the very pivot of the Falashas' religious life, but bears a strange, ascetic character, comparable in certain respects to the Sabbath of the Karaites. Sexual intercourse on this holy day is punished, at least in theory, with death, no light is kept burning on that day, and no drums or gongs are sounded. With the exception of the last item, all this is of course in complete contrast to the ways of the main branch of Judaism: all over the Jewish world Friday night used to be set aside for the fulfillment of the matrimonial duties, while the lighting of the candles on the eve of the Sabbath has become one of the most characteristic elements of a Jewish home. It would seem, however, that the earlier conception of the Sabbath was the ascetic one, and that the emphasis on the Sabbath as the day of family life—according to the rabbis the kindling of the candles symbolizes the "Peace of the House"—was the result of a popular, and as such even more significant, reaction.

The extreme veneration of the Sabbath among the Falashas is expressed also most vividly in the creation of a female hypostasis, called Sanbat (Sabbath), who is a celestial being higher than the angels, crowned and praised by them, and who intercedes with God for all those who keep the Sabbath properly. The Falashas seem to attach to the personified Sabbath many of the emotions which their Christian countrymen would entertain towards the Virgin.

THE Sabbath hypostasis has also given rise to the most original piece of Falasha religious literature, the Book of the Sabbath, a translation of which opens Dr. Leslau's anthology. Like most Falasha literature, it has not been handed on to the present generation in its original form, and even a century ago only a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Arturo Toscanini conducting "Death and Transfiguration," Opus 24, by Richard Strauss

RCA High Fidelity brings you every musical note!

RCA Victor High Fidelity is the result of a half century of leadership in recorded music, in phonograph research and in the development of radio and motion picture sound equipment. It is a great new dimension in sound created by the perfect union of recorded music and the phonograph.

A genuine high fidelity instrument re-creates the full range of tones and overtones of the original composition—exactly as the composer intended.

"Victrola"® phonographs, Victor records, and "intermatched" high fidelity equipments for those who want to assemble their own units—all are designed to work perfectly together to bring all of the brilliance of the original performance into the home.

The nation-wide interest in high fidelity reflects the public's growing taste for the highest quality in recorded and broadcast music. Developments by RCA scientists and engineers now make it possible for you to enjoy this new musical experience.

RCA ® *RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA*

World leader in radio—first in television

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather confused text could be found in the country. The Falashas had been a freedom-loving, warlike people, who for many centuries had to undergo terrible trials in their fight for independence against the kings of Ethiopia; as a result, they were reduced to a comparatively small, economically weak, and spiritually not very much developed community (although Dr. Leslau praises their zeal for the education of their children). Nevertheless, despite its rather confused arrangement, the Book of the Sabbath displays a genuine and most original religious attitude.

The other books presented in translation in this anthology are mostly adaptations from the so-called apocryphal literature created towards the end of the Second Commonwealth, with its revelations about life after death, about the Heavens, and about Hell and Paradise, as well as recasts from Christian Ethiopic or Arabic sources, which in their turn were strongly influenced by later Jewish lore and fiction. Some of these pieces, for example the book of "The Death of Moses," are not without a particular charm and even humor. All the translated selections are preceded by useful short introductions and synopses.

It is instructive to compare the Falashas with another Jewish group, the Yemenites, who lived on the hills overlooking the opposite, eastern, shore of the Red Sea, which divides Africa from Arabia. The Yemenites have participated in each and every phase of the development of Judaism; they are Jews in the fullest sense, although they show some strange traits owing to their long geographical segregation from the rest of the Jewish people. They represent the case of a portion of the Jewish people separated from the rest only by outward conditions and therefore able to "come back" and to amalgamate with the main body without serious difficulties.

The Falashas offer the contrary example of a foreign population converted to Judaism by the missionary efforts of an ancient Jewish sect and developing completely on its own line. From the religious point of view the Falashas display many original and most significant aspects. In particular in these days, when the discovery and the decipherment of the Dead Sea scrolls is bringing us so much fresh material about the life of the ancient Jewish sects, the study of the Falashas should be given new momentum. It is to be hoped that Dr. Leslau will be enabled to make a third expedition to Ethiopia, in order to carry out, *inter alia*, a final examination of that most interesting community.

The Working Day

71½ Cents. By Richard Bissell. Little, Brown. 245 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by Nathan Glick

The 30's had their "proletarian" novels, but these were concerned with class-consciousness and revolt, and not with how a worker passed eight, ten, or twelve hours at a machine or desk. The 40's brought forth novels about life in the office of *Time* or the *Times*, of an advertising agency or a private eye or a diabolical magnate. But their interest in the daily life of the office was usually either grudging or exotic, a matter of local color or of providing a prosaic background for the "real thing" which lay always beyond and outside the office. Then there appeared, in passing, novels which treated modern industry as a phase of the purgatory through which the artist-writer must pass to discover his true self, novels in the main of anguish and rejection.

In contrast to this, Mr. Bissell looks amiably upon the third floor office of the Sleep Tite plant in Junction City, Iowa (*Sleep Tite, the Pajama for Men of Bedroom Discrimination*), finding it interesting for its own sake. Not that he has any notion of celebrating modern industry or boosting the morale of its wage slaves, or any visible ambition in the direction of sociological reportage. If he is celebrating anything, it is the survival of the Horatio Alger taint in the person of a moderately sophisticated small-fry plant superintendent named Sid Sorokin. Sid is a novelty of normality in recent fiction. He is everywhere, and everywhere indispensable to the modern industrial machine, but no one to my knowledge has before this deigned to make him a fictional hero. This particular Sid Sorokin is twenty-eight, educated in the public schools of Gary, Indiana, the night schools and correspondence courses of Chicago, and a whole gamut of jobs in the garment trade. He has wit and industry. He is easily bored and upset, but, unlike the artist type, he is eminently practical, with a strong and active instinct for self-preservation. Again unlike the artist type, he retains his capacity for prosaic pleasures. So in the middle of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary on Commentary

Commentary . . . "a thing serving for exposition or illustration." That's Webster's third definition of the word.

Thus, the famous Amoco oval may be called a commentary on the American Oil Company, a thing serving for exposition or illustration.

It illustrates the service, efficiency, and courtesy you can expect at Amoco stations. It illustrates the complete automotive line you'll find at Amoco dealers. It illustrates the integrity with which the American Oil Company stands behind its products and the faith with which it stands behind its men. Look for the Amoco oval. It's the sign of greater values from Maine to Florida!

AMERICAN AMOCO GAS

AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

Hear "Edward R. Murrow and the News," 7:45 P.M., Monday through Friday, CBS-Radio Network
See Edward R. Murrow in "Person to Person," 10:30 P.M., Fridays, CBS-TV Network

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standard gripe about the constant tension of the factory and the pot shots sent his way by labor on one side and top management on the other, Sid feels impelled to confess that "nobody has to be a superintendent of a garment plant unless he wants to. So far I can't say I had been having a very bad time. Having a pretty good time as a matter of fact."

If Sid is having a pretty good time, some of the credit is owing to Babe Williams, a freckled and forthright beauty "who operated a Union Special 51400 and could set more sleeves in an eight-hour day than any operator between Council Bluffs and Columbus." She is one type of "queen" of which every garment factory contains several. Another is the quiet brunette with olive skin and enormous dark eyes "who put button holes in the flies of men's pajamas with a genteel air as though she were pouring tea at the Junior League." Babe is Sid's principal and intimate source of pleasure at Sleep Tite, but she is also, as ringleader of the union slowdown, his tormentor. Manning the barricades on the opposite side is Sid's cadaverous, penny-pinching boss, Myron Hasler, a man of stern principles derived from Fulton Lewis, Jr. And with Sid in the middle of the battle sits Mabel, repository of gossip and bulwark of strength, Sleep Tite's particular variation of the universal female office wheelhorse: "Mabel was about forty-three or forty-eight or fifty-one, hard to tell—one of those big energetic girls with a big bust, a lot of hair, and good-looking legs (but also solid), and she alternated between fancy printed dresses with everything on them that a sewing machine would hold together and tailored suits, which she wore partly because they made her look like a career woman such as Colbert or Roz Russell and partly to annoy her husband."

In working out the ramifications of this particular segment of the class struggle, Mr. Bissell has made a modest but significant contribution toward the folklore of American capitalism. He has documented for the first time to my knowledge, in the popular medium of the novel, the precise Lardnerian language of a business house bulletin for salesmen, along with supremely meaningful and hilarious verbatim extracts from the morning mail of a plant superintendent. His chapter epigraphs, culled from the weirdest sources (ranging from S. J. Perelman to a brochure entitled *The Progressive Sewing Room*), constitute a mocking commentary on our industrial rituals. Most of all, he has conveyed something of the incalculable variety and monotony of the eight-hour day, filled with small talk, irritations, gripes, wisecracks, high spirits, work, goofings-off, machine breakdowns, sex, and the casual fireworks of a union drive for a 7½-cents-an-hour raise.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Solomon F. Bloom is professor of history at Brooklyn College, and the author of *The World of Nations.*

Martin Greenberg is an associate editor of Commentary.

Henry L. Roberts is an assistant professor of history at Columbia University, now on leave directing a research project for the Council on Foreign Relations.

Daniel J. Boorstin is an associate professor at the University of Chicago, and the author of *The Mysterious Science of the Law, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson,* and, most recently, *The Genius of American Politics.*

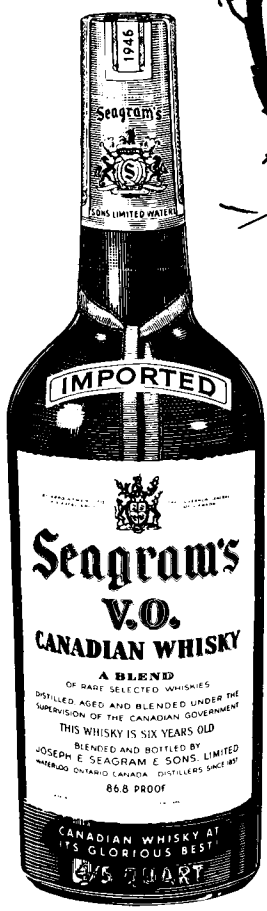
S. D. Goitein is dean of the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; this year he is visiting professor at Dropsie College in Philadelphia.

Nathan Glick frequently reviews books and films for Commentary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This year for Chanukah
Give the Canadian Whiskey that's

IN HIGHEST FAVOR AMONG IMPORTED WHISKIES



In HONOR of the Occasion
Give the Gift that HONORS

Seagram's VO

CANADIAN WHISKY—A BLEND... OF RARE SELECTED WHISKIES
THIS WHISKY IS SIX YEARS OLD • 86.8 PROOF • SEAGRAM-DISTILLERS CORP., NEW YORK, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Give the Gift that Pays a Compliment

THEY* WILL THANK YOU 12 TIMES A YEAR FOR COMMENTARY — THE THOUGHTFUL REMEMBRANCE.

*** YOUR RABBI . . . who will find in Commentary a mine of sermon material**

"Since its first issue I have found Commentary a genuine intellectual stimulant. In addition it has been most useful in the preparation of sermons, addresses and lectures." *Rabbi Harry Z. Zwelling*

*** A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE . . .**

"Enclosed is a check for a year's subscription to be sent to our foreign affairs correspondent . . . I want to congratulate you and your staff for the outstanding job you are doing."

Philip L. Graham, Publisher
The Washington Post

*** YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD MINISTER . . . who will receive a fair, dignified picture of Jewish life**

"I beg to give you my thanks for the renewal of my gift subscription to Commentary. I welcome this opportunity to express my enthusiastic admiration for the magazine. Commentary is ably edited and maintains an extraordinarily high standard of thought. I never fail to give it a careful reading each month." *John Haynes Holmes*

*** A FELLOW COMMITTEE MEMBER . . . who is interested in Jewish and world affairs**

". . . I think you have brought Commentary into full flower as a provocative and intelligent magazine." *Dore Schary*

*** A MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES . . . who wants to keep in touch**

"In a letter from our son, David, now stationed in Germany, he writes: 'You ask if there is any publication I want to get—and the answer is most emphatically yes: Commentary. Of all the magazines and papers I don't get, that's the one I miss the most'." *Mrs. M. P. H.*

*** SOMEONE IN ISRAEL . . .**

"Thanks to your generosity we shall be in a position of reading regularly one of the most interesting and valuable Jewish periodicals not only of the United States but of the whole world and being kept informed of the events and problems occupying the Jewish community of America."

The Executive of the Zionist Organization

*** YOUR DOCTOR . . . who will find Commentary a time-saver in keeping informed**

"A friend gave me Commentary for three years—now I am going to pass along the good deed to another doctor." *Dr. C. M. S.*

*** YOUR FRIENDS . . . who share your tastes and interests**

"My wife and I feel that Commentary is one of the few magazines in the United States written on an adult level and we are taking your special offer as an opportunity to introduce it to a few friends."

Harold Bornstein

*** A STUDENT AT COLLEGE . . . who will view Jewish life with new respect**

"I am now a student at Los Angeles State College majoring in Sociology. . . . The stories, poetry and book reviews are well written and are most absorbing. On many occasions I've been late for a class due to your fine magazine." *Max Wolf*

Use the Handy Order Card Found in This Issue

It's so easy to give—just indicate on the gift order card in this magazine, the names of those with whom you wish to share your enjoyment.

And so inexpensive too! . . . $5 for the first, $4 for each additional subscription.

MAIL YOUR ORDER TODAY. We will send a gift announcement in your name.

Subscription Department

COMMENTARY • 34 West 33rd Street • New York 1, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The

Bernhard Altmann

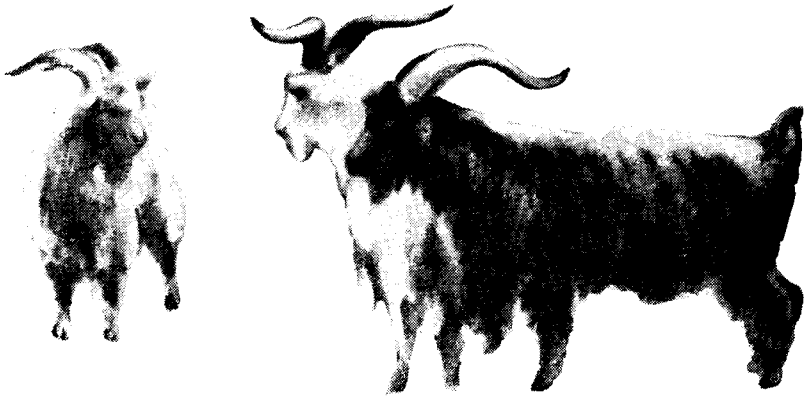
Corporation

New York
Vienna
San Antonio
Montreal

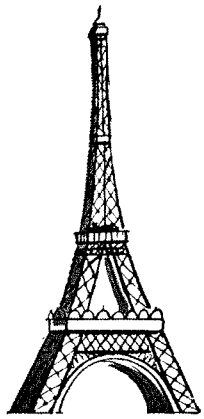
the world's most beautiful hand-sewn,
full fashioned sweaters
in nature's finest, rarest yarns.

Cashmere

In leading stores everywhere



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

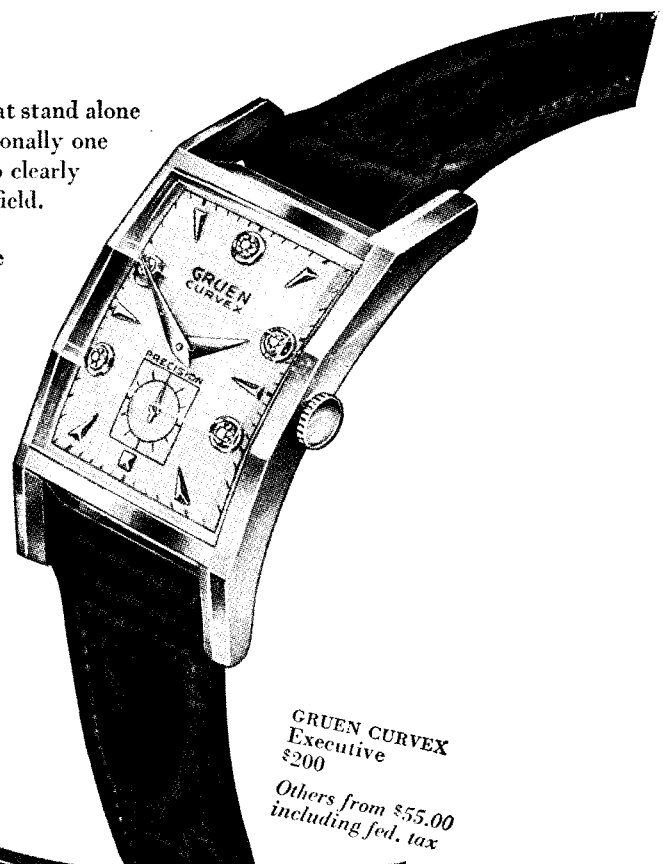


There are no others like it

Like the few fabulous achievements that stand alone for the world to admire, occasionally one product is so unique a development as to clearly establish a proud quality standard for its field.

This is Gruen Curvex*—watches of rare beauty and distinction for men and women. The patented curved movement in the curved case eliminates awkward bulk and permits the ultimate in famed Gruen styling excellence.

If you spend $55.00 or more for any watch, you are paying for a Gruen Curvex. Why not have one?



GRUEN CURVEX
Executive
$200

Others from $55.00 including fed. tax

GRUEN
*Curvex**

The only watch of its kind in the world!

ENGINEERED TO CREATE WATCH PERFECTION

Curved movement in Gruen Curvex permits large, sturdy dependable parts.

Ordinary curved watches have flat, undersized movement.

THE GRUEN WATCH COMPANY · TIME HILL · CINCINNATI 6, OHIO

*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED